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OCWEEKLY.

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Hmm... In retrospect, perhaps the "drug it to laugh it" bit was an error in judgment on my part... but the chihuahua was raised close to $70

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A proposed class action settlement has been reached in a Class Action lawsuit called South v RMG Sunset, Inc Case No BC652905 claiming that certain restaurants in California added an undisclosed state living wage surcharge onto restaurant bills

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WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?

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A final approval hearing will take place on June 18, 2018 at 11:00 am in Dept. 308 of The Los Angeles Superior Court located at 600 Commonwealth Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90005, to determine the fairness, adequacy, and reasonableness of the settlement, whether to approve the settlement and attorneys' fees and costs and class representative awards. The motion for attorneys' fees and costs will be posted on the website after they are filed. You may attend the hearing, but you don't have to

This is only a summary. For more information or to file a claim, go to any of the Restaurants, or visit www.SouthSurchargeSettlement.com.

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dana watch»

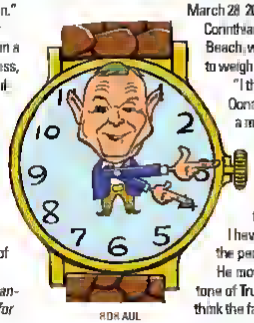
Never Trumpers Clash

» MATT COKER

In an April 23 letter to Orange County GOP Chairman Fred Whitaker, 48th congressional district candidate Scott Baugh and 19 other prominent local Republicans call for the stop of campaign ads for incumbent Dana Rohrabacher that spread "false information."

In the bid by Rohrabacher (R-Putin's Clutch Purse) to win a 16th two-year term in Congress, his campaign has put out mailers that allege his former friend, state Assembly Republican leader and Orange County GOP chairman does not support President Donald Trump, making Baugh a "Never Trumper." The ads' fine print identifies this as the source of that contention.

Baugh donors said he "cannot and will not pull a lever for Donald Trump."



ROB AUL

The Whitaker letter argues that most reading that line would conclude that Baugh's donors heard him say he would never vote for Trump. This is deceitful syntax by the Rohrabacher campaign, states the letter, as "donors" should read "donor," in which case the sentence would read "Baugh donor said he cannot and will not pull a lever for Donald Trump™. They add that is only true if you read it in the proper context: it was not Baugh, but the male donor who said he won't vote for Trump, and it was not ever, but in one primary election that preceded the 2016 presidential vote. The letter includes examples of Baugh having supported Trump.

Baugh's own mailers go even further, accusing Rohrabacher of being the Never Trumper. The Baugh campaign's source is a recording from a March 28, 2016, conversation at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club in Newport Beach, where Rohrabacher was asked to weigh in on the presidential race.

"I thought I was going to support Donald Trump, but I can't support a man who is a mean, nasty SOB," says the speaker who sounds an awful lot like Rohrabacher. "I think Americans, we deserve to treat each other civilly, and I have always been courteous to the people who disagree with me."

He moves on to comment on the tone of Trump's campaign rallies. "I think the fact there's some violence popping up now—and, yeah, you need to blame the people who are doing the violence—but you have to say that Donald Trump creates this atmosphere of meanness."

By the way, airing a private conversation in California is illegal without the consent of all participants.

Got Dana Watch fodder? Email mcoker@ocweekly.com.

HEY YOU!

» ANONYMOUS

Shoo, Shingles!

You are the quarter-shaped lesion that appeared on my forehead a few weeks ago out of nowhere. At first, I thought you were skin cancer, but when I treated you to a dose of Neosporin—which, out of an abundance of caution, I smeared all over my forehead—I awoke the next morning with raging blisters across my face. By Monday, my eye was swollen shut. At first, the doctors said you were an allergic reaction to Neosporin, but when I stumbled half-blind into the ER a few days later, I learned you were the dreaded shingles. I've taken my pills and have been using the steroid cream religiously, but you still won't go away, nor will the pain. I am slowly losing my mind. Shoo, shingles, shoo!

ROB AUL

HEY, YOU! Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey, You!" c/o *OC Weekly*, 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com

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SANDERS (LEFT) WITH WILSON

A MOST UNLIKELY ALLIANCE

A MASSACRE TOOK PAUL WILSON'S WIFE, BUT DIRTY COPS CHANGED HIS OUTLOOK

BY R. SCOTT MOXLEY

CHAPTER ONE

Having waited nearly four years to see punishment for the unhinged, heavily armed man who in 2011 murdered his wife and seven other people in Orange County's worst mass shooting, Paul Wilson stood before Superior Court Judge Thomas M. Goethals on March 20, 2015, incredulous that *People v. Scott Dekraai* would take more time to resolve. After all, prosecutors held a slam-dunk case. Minutes following the Seal Beach salon massacre, cops captured Dekraai fleeing in his pickup truck toward Huntington Beach on Pacific Coast Highway, about two football fields away from crashing ocean waves. The 41-year-old former yacht-crew member, who'd been disabled in a freak boating accident, immediately confessed.

At the time, nobody foresaw an approaching disaster that would stall *Dekraai*. For years, with the approval of their superiors, corrupt Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) jail deputies in the Special Handling Unit conducted secret, illegal scams to help Tony Rackauckas' district attorney's office (OCDA) win cases. The same month that Wilson expressed dismay, Goethals, a former prosecutor, historically recused Rackauckas and his entire office from the trial after concluding they couldn't be trusted to act ethically during the penalty phase. Evidence collected at special evidentiary hearings proved the DA and Sheriff Sandra Hutchens' deputies repeatedly cheated to tilt the criminal-justice system toward the government's preferred outcome: a death penalty for Dekraai.

After a remorseless Rackauckas announced he would appeal Goethals' ruling, his aides advised Wilson, then baffled by developments, the move could delay the case for as long as two or three, perhaps even five years, as the appellate process played out. The international-clothing-industry executive had been living in misery since he lost Christy, the 47-year-old mother of his three kids and wife of 26 blissful

years. Losing the love of his life unexpectedly was painful enough, but a seemingly unending legal process blocked Wilson from any hope of healing. Yet, he couldn't stay away from the drawn-out courthouse drama. In his mind, ignoring proceedings meant a betrayal of Christy's memory, though attendance necessitated sitting 10 feet from Dekraai day after day for years.

"I'm in total disbelief today," Wilson told Goethals, Rackauckas and a packed Santa Ana courtroom that included nearly two dozen reporters. "There is no doubt in anybody's minds this coward killed eight people. And now we are in this system where I'm looking at another year of appeals and another year of this. I'm in this tumbler, and I'm wondering why [with] something that was so cut and dry that we have to sit through this. It's the worst week of my life, beside the week that [the murder] happened. [I'm tired] of trying to explain to my family why this is happening, why this just can't go away. I just don't have answers for them anymore, mainly because I'm just beat up."

For years, Wilson desperately wanted a non-compliant Rackauckas to end the case, the controversy surrounding what had become known nationally as Orange County's jailhouse-informant scandal and his anguish by accepting a defense proposal that Dekraai receive eight consecutive life-in-prison terms without the possibility of parole. He also aimed anger at Scott Sanders, the assistant public defender representing the killer and the person who discovered the systematic, illegal use of jail snitches to bolster prosecutions without judges and juries learning of the tactic. As the case proceeded slowly, the defense lawyer regularly expressed compassion for the victims, a sentiment that went noticeably unreturned.

Said Wilson, "Mr. Sanders, you can sit in that hallway, sit down next to me all you want and tell me what you're doing is right. It's not right. You've got blood on your hands. How do you go to bed every night knowing that? I would be embarrassed if I did what you're doing to these families and to me in defense of him. This whole due process, all of this—I believed in the system. I just don't anymore. Because we are fighting for his rights."

An unflinching Dekraai, who was handcuffed to his chair, stared down at the table in front of him, while a seated Sanders had turned around to face Wilson. He slowly nodded at each line while resisting urges to wince, especially after his children were mentioned. Later, Sanders told reporters he understood his client caused enormous pain.

"Let's march the eight [victims] in here and ask them about their rights," Wilson continued. "Can't do that because [Dekraai] killed them. He murdered every one of them. They didn't have any rights. They don't today, but he does. And there is nothing you can tell me, that anybody in this room can tell me, that [says] he deserves to have rights. I just don't get it, and I never will get it. You'll never convince me of that. I'm ashamed that I've got to come in here for three and a half years and that guy gets to breathe the same oxygen that I breathe and that these families get to breathe. He doesn't deserve that right."

"You've got blood on your hands. How do you go to bed every night knowing that?"

But in one of the most astonishing reversals in Southern California legal history, Wilson eventually abandoned his criticism of Sanders and embraced his work as righteous. The two men have become friends and confidants. They even share an indignant mantra: What kind of police cheat in slam-dunk cases? To Rackauckas' horror, this formidable duo claims to share a previously undisclosed mission to shine a spotlight on entrenched corruption in Orange County law enforcement.

CHAPTER TWO

At about 2 p.m. on Oct. 12, 2011, Wilson's 21-year-old daughter, Kielynn, called to ask if he knew what was happening at Salon Meritage. She had driven by on her way to work and saw cops, helicopters, a crowd and yellow crime-scene tape. "I figured there'd been an auto accident," recalled Wilson, who was working in downtown Los Angeles. "I said, 'Let me call Christy.' I called five or six times. Usually, even if she's busy, she picks up. But she didn't do that."

Then he received a call from Gordon Gallego, Christy's co-worker at the salon. He'd escaped the carnage by hiding in a bathroom while Dekraai executed his plan. "I heard fear in his voice," said Wilson. "He said, 'Paul, you've got to get down here.' I said, 'Where is Christy? Tell me Christy is okay.' He said, 'I can't do that.' Then the line went dead."

Wilson jumped in his car, turned his flashers on, honked his horn, ran red lights, and wove in and out of the HOV lane and freeway shoulder during the 20-minute trip. "I started to hyperventilate," he said. "I felt my hands tightening on the steering wheel." While he raced down the 605 freeway, his mother called to say there had been a shooting at the salon, but she didn't think Christy was involved. Wilson felt relief.

"We met when we were 21 and fell in love immediately," he recently recalled. "We thought we'd be together forever. We had an amazing life."

But when he arrived at the salon, he spotted her Cadillac Escalade parked on the other side of crime-scene tape. "I just got this feeling in my gut. I knew."

Authorities directed family members of the salon employees to a nearby church. Wilson sat on the floor. A harrowing mental fog took over that wouldn't disappear for months. Reports of the massacre dominated news outlets throughout the state. Dekraai had worn a bulletproof vest and used three weapons in a two-minute attack motivated by a desire to harm his 48-year-old ex-wife, Michelle Fournier—Christy's co-worker and longtime friend—over a bitter child-custody dispute.

Wilson waited more than 30 hours for the coroner to confirm his wife was among the victims who'd died from multiple gunshot wounds. Others killed were Victoria Buzzo, 54; David Laouette, 64; Randy Lee Fannin, 62; Michele Fast, 37; Lucia Bernice Kondas, 65; and Laura Webb Elody, 46. Elody's 73-year-old mother, Hattie Stretz, survived the attack.

Seven years later, tears still appear in Wilson's eyes as he recounts the tragedy. He says the first six months following the murders were excruciating. Compounding his fury, he and his family knew the killer for years, even dined with him. In fact, Dekraai had given a surfboard to one of Wilson's sons as a gift.

"After we knew it was Dekraai who took his mom away, I watched my son start beating up that surfboard with a hammer, just crushing it, pulverizing it," Wilson said. "I let him do it. He needed to get frustration out."

CHAPTER THREE

Two days after the shooting, Rackauckas summoned the victims' families to his 10th-floor office inside the OCDA's Santa Ana headquarters. Having never been in a courthouse and knowing little about the justice system, Wilson accepted the DA's performance as genuine. "He put on a really sad face and sad voice and gave us a speech," Wilson said. "He told us he was using his best team on the case and that we had 24-hour access to them seven days a week."

The DA noted he'd "shoulder the burden" of handling the press corps who'd gathered in a first-floor conference room. But before leaving, he made an assertion that's etched in Wilson's mind. "He said, 'We've got your back. I want you guys to know that.' And I believed him. Why would it be any other way? He's the district attorney of Orange County. That's his job."

At home, he watched TV news broadcasts featuring Rackauckas. "The people of our community were made victims of a bloody massacre by a methodical and merciless killer," the DA read from prepared remarks. "In a selfish, cruel act of senseless violence, eight innocent people were

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

...T UNLIKELY ALLIANCE

» FROM PAGE 9

murdered. A ninth remains in critical condition. The lives of the victims' families and friends will forever be changed, with a missing place in their hearts and a missing chair at their Thanksgiving dinners."

Later in the same press conference, the DA promised "to seek justice for the lives of each of these individuals to the best of our ability." He paused to weep for an extended period and announced he intended to hand Dekraai the ultimate punishment. "There are some cases that are so depraved and so callous and so malignant that there's only one punishment that might have any chance of fitting the crime," a sniffling Rackauckas said. "I will, of course, seek the death penalty."

But behind the scenes, Rackauckas wanted to ensure his victory, even if it meant conducting illegal operations. He sourly remembered the case of Edward Charles Allaway, who killed seven people at Cal State Fullerton in July 1976. Five mental-health professionals testified Allaway, who'd undergone electric-shock therapy, was insane, leading him to spend the past 43 years locked in a state mental hospital.

"There were certainly some concerns about the possibility of [Dekraai] deciding or his counsel deciding to go after an insanity plea," he admitted about his post-arrest thinking during a 2016 community forum. "Dekraai [who suffered Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder from the boating accident] had some psychiatric issues in his past."

One day following the DA's press conference, law-enforcement officials illegally plotted to trick an in-custody Dekraai into making statements that could preclude an insanity defense. Rackauckas knew but didn't care that the U.S. Supreme Court decided in 1964 (*USA v. Massiah*) that government officials and their agents, such as informants, are constitutionally banned from questioning charged and legally represented pretrial defendants. That legal reasoning goes back to the nation's Founding Fathers, who were disgusted by the King of England forcing people to testify against themselves in criminal trials.

But believing nobody would ever learn of their cheating, OCSD's Special Handling Unit placed prolific snitch Fernando Perez in the cell next to Dekraai after his arraignment. Perez, a two-faced Mexican Mafia boss who'd ordered murders for his gang and faced life in prison under California's Three Strikes law, knew his questioning of the government target would win rewards. He was right. In 2017, the OCDA dismissed serious counts and cut him a sweetheart deal that means he could win freedom as soon as 2022.

In the early stages of *Dekraai*, Rackauckas and Dan Wagner, the chief of the OCDA homicide unit, seized Dekraai's private psychiatric records without waiting for a court order. Next, they tried to use Perez's work in court by insisting authorities had no role in him befriending the defendant for weeks, as well as his reporting daily to deputies on the results of his questioning. Despite Wagner's strenuous attempts to hide the truth about the snitch, Sanders ultimately discovered the scam, and in 2014, Goethals ruled the collected statements impermissible, accused deputies of committing perjury to cover up their misconduct and voiced dismay that prosecutors ignored basic ethical obligations.

Though the cheating prolonged the case by years, Rackauckas remains unrepentant as he campaigns against opponents Supervisor Todd Spitzer, who has worked as a prosecutor, and Brett Murdock, the former mayor of Brea. The 75-year-old DA hails himself a law-n-order advocate, but he used a re-election event this year to mock the *Massiah* violations as highly "technical" requirements that shouldn't concern the public. He wants a sixth, four-year term following the June 5 election because he says he runs a near-perfect office.

CHAPTER FOUR

According to family and friends, *vivacious* is the best word to describe Christy Wilson. Standing a fit 5-foot-7 and 110 pounds, she had many loves: paddleboarding with a granddaughter in Huntington Harbor; working as a manicurist; watching comedy shows, raising her kids; traveling to lakes, rivers and the ocean, dining with her husband, Paul, drinking a good Chardonnay by their pool, chatting on her cellphone, cruising to Catalina Island on her parents' 50-foot yacht; and purchasing handmade decorative wood crosses that she displayed in her Lakewood home, where she maintained an open-door policy for visitors. Quick to make friends, she espoused unswerving optimism.

"Christy was a happy-go-lucky person," Paul explained. "She was never stressed. She always had a smile on her face. I'd tell her something bad that happened, and she'd go, 'Okay, Paul, that's bad, but here's the silver lining in that ...'"

Christy became increasingly interested in studying spirituality with a group of friends in the final years of her life. She enjoyed lighting incense and candles, thinking about her loved ones, and voicing positive hopes for their lives. Paul often saw her at peace outside, watching the moon's travel across night skies.

On the evening before her murder, she asked her husband to join her "forgiving moon," or full moon, watch. He declined, choosing instead to view ESPN in the den, where he fell asleep on a couch. When he awoke the next morning, Christy had four hours to live when she told him how the previous night had been "beautiful." Paul recalled her telling him, "I went out there, and I realized I didn't have anybody to ask forgiveness for or anything to forgive because everything is so good right now."

The couple drank coffee and read the newspaper, then Paul left to get a haircut at the Salon Meritage after kissing Christy goodbye. At the shop, Fournier told everyone that Dekraai—who twice before temporarily lost his guns to police because of violent episodes with family members—had called her, demanding a meeting at a café. Fearful of him, her co-workers objected.

A few hours after Paul left, the killer entered the shop's side entrance, walked up to Fournier, who was washing Christy's hair, and fired fatal shots at both before turning his attention to the others present, including Fast, who'd unfortunately chosen that day to use a gift certificate for her first visit.

CHAPTER FIVE

California's Marcy's Law requires crime victims "be treated with fairness and respect," but Paul Wilson's illusions about Rackauckas sharply eroded about two years into the case. Sanders announced in open court that the DA rejected his proposal to give his client eight consecutive life terms without the possibility of parole. The victims were stunned they'd been kept in the dark by prosecutors.

Although the families took differing views on a fitting punishment, Wilson abandoned his desire for the death penalty 12 months into the case. He'd learned the state held more than 760 inmates on death row, so a sentence of death was unlikely to ever be carried out and there would be potential decades of appeals. To argue for the plea deal that would allow him to start the healing process, Wilson demanded a meeting with Rackauckas.

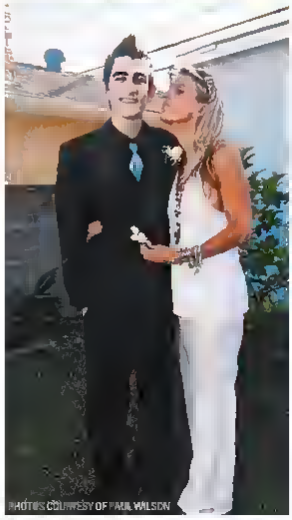
"Tony was sitting behind his desk with that blank, non-feeling look on his face," he said. "I asked him why he didn't open up [the plea-bargain offer] to a discussion with the families. He said, 'Mr. Wilson, I want you to know one thing: That decision rests only with one person, and that's me.' I said, 'Wait a minute, are you saying you never intended to let the families know about this?' Then he told me, 'I don't need your and the other families' input. It's my decision.' And I thought, 'Wow. This guy doesn't care about us.'"

The next blows to his confidence in the OCDA happened after Wagner blamed Goethals, whom Wilson greatly respects, for allowing embarrassing testimony of law-enforcement misconduct and labeled Sanders' discoveries just "crazy defense tactics." Wilson started paying more attention to information the public defender exposed about the scandal and reading the *Weekly*'s coverage. Wagner increasingly dodged his questions about illegal snitch use, lying deputies and hidden records.

"That's when the light bulb went off in my head," Wilson said. "These DA guys are not honest. Trying to get the death penalty wasn't for the families, like they promised, it was about what was best for Rackauckas. It's just a notch in his belt."

CHAPTER SIX

In a 2016 essay for *GQ* magazine, comedian Patton Oswalt recounted his daily struggles after Michelle McNamara, his 46-year-old wife, unexpectedly died in her sleep earlier that year because of an unknown heart condition and prescribed medication use. Oswalt was left to raise their 7-year-old daughter. He reported immense initial anger from his plight, causing fear of "the next jolt" in his life



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PAUL WILSON

For Wilson, the second jolt happened three months after Christy's murder. Doctors diagnosed one of his sons with life-threatening cancer requiring emergency surgery. "I had nothing left," he said. "I looked up at the sky and told God, 'Listen, I've had enough. Leave me alone. Don't pick on me anymore. They say you'll never put more on your plate than someone can handle. Well, you've given more than I can handle. You've beaten me to a pulp. Stop!'"

After he uttered those lines, he says, his eyes focused for the first time on a box his wife had placed in an odd spot in their home. "I looked inside and saw this little, hand-painted dish," Wilson said. The coroner's office hadn't returned either of Christy's two wedding rings, but when he looked inside the dish, he found a folded-up piece of paper that contained the original wedding ring and an inspirational message to him.

"There I am, at my end," Wilson said. "I'm in a rage, yelling at God, and all of a sudden, I got distracted, looked down and found her message and the ring. I started laughing my ass off because this is what Christy did. She always wanted me to know that everything's going to be okay."

That reminder was perhaps a follow-up to one of the day of his wife's funeral. He'd put on a new shirt that felt itchy and caused him to sweat. As his family got into limousines to go to the church, Wilson put the key in the front door to lock it. But then he decided to re-enter his home to change shirts. In the clothing closet, he discovered a notepad.

"I then remembered I'd wanted to write Christy a goodbye note and place it in her casket," he said. "I still get emotional about this. I opened up the notepad and see she had listed 'good intentions' she wanted for everyone in the family."

For Wilson, she wrote, "I sat outside today thinking about how lucky I am, how lucky we are. I love you every day."

She'd penned the note exactly one month before her murder.

CHAPTER SEVEN

On a late April morning in a doughnut shop near Little Saigon, the defense lawyer and the victim looked genuinely at ease with each other, even occasionally sharing laughs. Wilson still loathes Dekraai, but he accepts Sanders' continued attorney-client loyalty. Despite those differences, two tragedies—a massacre and a law-enforcement scandal—have produced an unlikely alliance. Sanders said to Wilson, "I would definitely say we've become friends," and he heard in reply, "Absolutely."

The transformation is breathtaking given tensions between the two in the early years of the case, before outsiders learned of Rackauckas' prosecution-team antics. Diverting attention from their own shoddy ethics, the DA's public-relations team headed by Susan Kang Schroeder worked to portray Sanders as the villain. Wilson initially bought the pitch, launched multiple blistering courtroom criticisms and, as he now concedes, "even rode him pretty hard" in the hallway during breaks.

Wilson explained, "You've got to remember the DA lied to us families that the defense was playing crazy games by making stuff up."

Sanders understands. "Paul deservedly was talking in court about what he was experiencing, and I listened," he said. "Sometimes, it was painful to hear. But I know that if you do what Mr. Dekraai did, you're going to get that response."

Wilson went from entirely supportive of the DA and railing on Sanders to railing on the prosecution, Rackauckas and Wagner. By mid-2015, his public pronouncements were aimed squarely at the prosecutors, blaming the DA for wrecking an easy case. The following year, he began praising the defense lawyer for exposing law-enforcement corruption. At the time of Dekraai's sentencing in September 2017, Wilson and Beth Webb, who lost her sister Laura in the massacre, declared their fondness for Sanders, his professional demeanor and his work ethic.

"I've never had a situation like this where people who have been through so much are able to look through that pain to see other issues," Sanders said. "It's so hard. I don't think there's been family

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

CHRISTY AND PAUL WITH A GRANDCHILD

MOONROOM PRESENTS
APAHM 2018
MORE TBA
ALL HELL! BREAKS LOOPS | SOD | C. KITEN | CERAMICS | TRIGGER | CHRISTOPHER DEL ROSARIO
DIRTY MERLIN | DJ LA PLAGA LL | DOCTORS & ENGINEERS | DREA & THE MARILYNS
EARTH IS A DEATH STAR | ECHAVOX | FOREST GROVE | GINGE | GOOD LUCK CLUB | HOUNDS
JASMINE SAWKARAN | JESEREY SANCHEZ | JETT KWONG | KARREN C. KELLEIA | KINKY & THE NYMPH
KOHINOORGASM | LIONS | NATIVITY | NICOLE KIKI JAFFE | PALADIN SHIELD | PASTHYPE
ROGER HALLAWAY | SMILING BETH | SURELY LORRAINE | TOMI-MITSU
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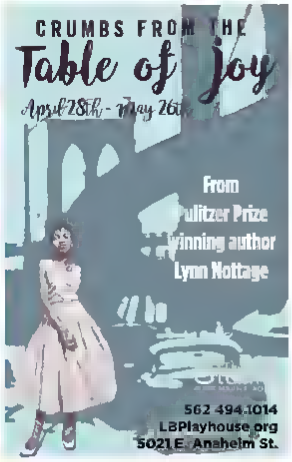


» FROM PAGE 11

members in this type of crime who have been able to see what the government was doing was so outrageous. It will never change their feelings toward Mr. Dekraai. I wouldn't expect it to. But to see there's something else going on [with the cheating] and know it's terrible—not as a terrible as losing love ones, but still terrible—that's an incredible, historic shift."

CHAPTER EIGHT

The criminal-justice system can't function if it tolerates cops who violate the law, hide evidence and commit perjury. Theoretically, local DA offices would hold badged law breakers accountable. But Orange County is a place where police corruption has been largely tolerated. The most glaring recent example was in *Dekraai*. Rackauckas refused to file charges against at least three OCSD Special Handling Unit deputies who, as Goethals noted, flagrantly lied on the witness stand in 2014 and 2015.

What's supposed to happen when a local DA is an ethical mess is that higher powers step in and pursue corruption cases. That's what happened a decade ago when Rackauckas hailed then-Sheriff Mike Carona's integrity. The U.S. Department of Justice, IRS and FBI stepped in, investigated bribery, won a conviction, and sent Carona to federal prison for 66 months.

In March 2015, the California Attorney General's office under now-U.S. Senator Kamala Harris opened a probe into Hutchens' OCSD because of the snitch scandal. It also reluctantly assumed control of the *Dekraai* case after Rackauckas' recusal and tried to defend the embattled DA before an unimpressed California Court of Appeal. Federal judges have also criticized the state agency for protecting dirty cops and prosecutors, and the Orange County situation brought no change.

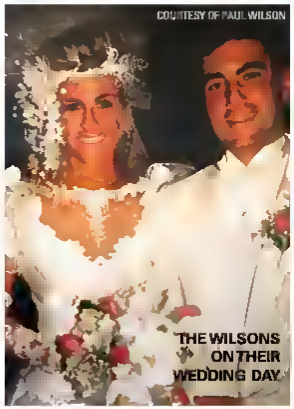
Instead of filing charges against the lying deputies, the AG's office, under Harris and then Xavier Becerra, have followed Rackauckas' path. They've done nothing but allow statutes of limitations to expire on the deputies' 2014 perjury. Meanwhile, by claiming it's still busy investigating Hutchens' outfit, the office used that excuse to keep defense lawyers from viewing evidence of OCSD corruption in numerous other trials against citizens unlucky enough just to be civilians. The wily sheriff has piggybacked on the AG's stall posture by claiming she can't discipline the cheaters in her department until the alleged probe ends.

"The AG's office keeps saying they are investigating, but nothing is being done," Wilson said. "Everybody in the justice system has to be honest, or it won't work. We're a perfect example of that. Look at what happened to our case because so many in the sheriff's department and DA's office were dishonest. So, we, as victims, spent almost seven years going to court when it should have been over within two years."

In December 2017, after Dekraai had been transported to Charles Manson's longtime home at Corcoran State Prison in the Central Valley, Wilson remained seething about what he'd witnessed. He wanted action. After mulling over his options, he sent a five-page letter to Becerra.

"No justification exists for the failure to bring charges," he wrote. "I want to talk face-to-face to explain why the family members of those killed and injured in this case are victims of the perjury and cheating that destroyed the trial. You also need to understand that we won't be the only victims if you fail to act. If people with badges are led to believe they can ignore the laws the rest of us must follow, they'll never worry about violating them, and down the road, others will have their lives turned upside-down when the misconduct is finally discovered."

The AG declined a rendezvous, but several of his staffers based in Los Angeles appeared for a meeting. Wilson asked them to name "just one thing" they'd done in recent months in their OCSD investigation. They declined, claiming their ongoing probe requires their public silence.



CHAPTER NINE

While driving south on the 5 freeway in late 2017, Wilson felt some relief. He'd met a woman who also lost partner in an unexpected tragic accident, and the two fell in love. But he began to feel despondent, realizing nobody in power was willing to fight corruption in OC.

"I was thinking it's over, but it can't be over," he recalled. "These guys have to be held accountable. We can't walk away now. We can't stop."

He called the last person anyone would expect: Sanders.

"So, we've found this unusual alignment," the public defender explained. "Paul is just as strong, if not stronger, saying, 'We're not going to let them get away with it.' We have an interesting challenge. How do we bring people's attention to the fact that the system here isn't working?"

RSCOTTMOXLEY@OCWEEKLY.COM

*calendar

sunday›
THEIR HITS ARE ON OUR LIST

STUART PENG

fri/05/04

[FILM]

A Fantastic Voyage!
Starship Frida

The Frida Cinema has a big-bang sci-fi film event scheduled for May the 4th, and if you just mentally added "be with you," then you are absolutely its target demographic. The roster of films is mostly secret, but the opener and closer are definitely crowd-pleasers. first up is the *Firefly* film *Serenity*, the cultiest of cult outings, and last is *The Fifth Element*, which remains a stylish stand-out after more than 20 years. In between? Well, that's uncharted space for now, but Frida promises nothing but the classics, so feel free to speculate. The ultimate journey starts at 8 p.m. and runs all night, so plan on the kind of long-haul endurance test that marked interstellar travel before cryosleep and hyperspace travel—but if you're going to this, you're already ready for anything.

Starship Frida. 12-Hour Intergalactic Sci-Fi Marathon at the Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 285-9422, thefridacinema.org. 8 p.m. $20
—CHRIS ZIEGLER

[CONCERT]

SOUNDS OF OC
OC Music Festival

It's high time a comprehensive festival celebrating popular and long-existing acts based in Orange County took place. While you're not going to find every OC band here, the lineup isn't too shabby. Over the course of three days, the fest sprawls across the Irvine Lake grounds, with two stages jam-packed with some of the best bands from our parts, including Cubensis, the Higgs, Wheeland Brothers, Strawberry Moon, Rose's Pawn Shop, the Simpkin Project, plus others. With options to camp, too, you've got the optimal setting for groovy festival enjoyment.

OC Music Festival at Oak Canyon Park, 5303 E. Santiago Canyon Rd., Silverado, www.oc-musicfest.com. 4 p.m.; also Sat.-Sun. $99-$159. —AIMEE MURILLO

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sat/05/05

[FESTIVALS]

SOUNDS LIKE FUN!
Wild West Steam Fest

No one has ever experienced the west quite like this. Santa Ana's Heritage Museum transports Wild West and steampunk enthusiasts to a time and place that has only existed in an alternate universe. Witness gunfights; experience wagon rides, play games of chance; dance to live music; buy western and steam gear from vendors; attend panels, workshops and screenings, take the edge off the day in the beer garden with grub from the food trucks; and much more. Once you step onto the grounds, you will be immersed in a colorful hybrid world of fantasy that you may not want to leave.

Wild West Steam Fest at Heritage Museum, 3101 W. Harvard St., Santa Ana, (714) 540-0404, www.wildweststeamfest.com. 11 a.m. $12-$30, children younger than 5, free. —SCOTT FEINBLATT

[CONCERT]

Uniting the *Vatos*
Manic Hispanic

If you want to celebrate Cinco de Mayo in a truly notable way, don't plow through margaritas with the cougars at Javier's. Instead, you'd best be present at this show at Alex's Bar, which features some badass Mexican-American bands. Legendary Chicano OC punk group Manic Hispanic headline this two-day engagement, with different supporting acts each day. Today, they share the bar's tiny-but-mighty stage with fellow rockers Piñata Protest, Shiners Club and Penetratorz, tomorrow, it's Piñata Protest again with famous ska-punks Viernes 13 and the Henchmen. Pay your respects to Manic Hispanic's fallen front man, Mike "Gabby" Gaborno, while celebrating the next wave of Chicano punks carrying the torch of raw, righteous power.

Manic Hispanic with Piñata Protest, Shiners Club and Penetratorz at Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com. 5 p.m. $15.
—AIMEE MURILLO

sun/05/06

[HEALTH & FITNESS]

Ready, Set, Go!

OC Marathon

This weekend will see a surge of fitness events, courtesy of the OC Marathon, which benefits charities including Islamic Relief USA, the John Wayne Cancer Foundation, and the Boys and Girls Club of Orange County. Starting Friday, health and wellness enthusiasts can check out the OC Fitness and Lifestyle Expo at the OC Fair and Event Center, while today, runners can participate in the full and half marathons near Fashion Island, followed by a finishing-line after-party. Runners have an additional option to run for free if they align with a charity sponsorship; non-runners are also welcome to donate to participating charities.

OC Marathon starts at Newport Center near Fashion Island, 900 Newport Center Dr., Newport Beach, ocmarathon.com. 5 a.m. Runner, $15 registration. —AIMEE MURILLO

[CONCERT]

We Can Go for That

Hall & Oates

Raise your hand if you would have expected Hall & Oates to be headlining an arena in 2018. The '80s pop/rock icons continue to be exactly that: icons. Their catchy, smooth R&B-tinged hits remain radio staples, and their popularity testifies to the staying power of their biggest hits. The duo received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2016 and were inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2014. So, as they continue to tour, expect a heavy array of greatest hits sprinkled into a set that will have fans rolling back the years to when Daryl Hall and John Oates topped the charts as one of the biggest bands in pop.

Hall & Oates with Train and Kandace Springs at the Honda Center, 2695 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (714) 704-2400, www.hondacenter.com. 7 p.m. $49-$154. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

LEWIS BLACK
MAY 11
EARTH, WIND & FIRE
MAY 19
TOM JONES
MAY 25
BILLY IDOL
MAY 27
CAFÉ TACVBA
MAY 26
JUN 2 ANDY HUI
JUN 18 CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVISITED
JUN 23 PANDORA & YURI
JUN 29 LITTLE BIG TOWN
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mon/05/07

[FILM]

Extreme Cinema

Jailbreak

If you can't wait for the annual Cambodia Town Film Festival that takes place in Long Beach every fall, here's a screening to hold you over. *Jailbreak* is an action-suspense rollercoaster ride filled with intrigue, mayhem and action stunt choreography. The premise: dangerous prisoners inhabiting a high-security prison overtake their guards, including a team of Special Task Force Officers on patrol, in an effort to take control of the facility. It's up to the intrepid team to fight back for their own survival.

Jailbreak premieres at Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 438-5435, www.facebook.com/JailbreakTheMovie. 6 p.m. $10. —AIMEE MURILLO

tue/05/08

[CONCERT]

Secular Hymns for Her

Madeleine Peyroux

Roots chanteuse Madeleine Peyroux can sound like nearly anyone she chooses—including Billie Holiday and Bessie Smith—but in the 20 years since she burst onto the scene, she's been sounding more and more like herself. Peyroux evokes, interprets and seduces with a velvety, echoing voice and careful arrangements courtesy of her tight, hummin' trio. Songs arrive with a musicologist's care and respectful good taste, reminding audiences of her ambitious and eclectic legacy. Her latest CD, *Secular Hymns*, features Tom Waits and Stephen Foster, and a new one is due out this summer.

Madeleine Peyroux at the Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, (949) 496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com. 8 p.m. $42.50. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

wed/05/09

[THEATER]

DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES

The Sisters Rosenweig

This dramedy by Tony- and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Wendy Wasserstein broke new theatrical ground back in 1992 by focusing on the lives of three middle-aged Jewish women, with early productions starring such luminaries as Madeline Kahn, Jane Alexander and Frances McDormand. The Brooklyn sisters—Sara, a successful banker; Pfeni, a globe-trotting journalist, and Gorgeous, an irrepressible radio host—gather in London for Sara's 54th birthday and engage in witty banter about the quest for love, acceptance and self-fulfillment. Wasserstein pointedly wrote *The Sisters Rosenweig* to celebrate the possibilities of middle-aged women, instead of their regrets, and won the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Play for her effort. This production directed by Casey Stangl stars Amy Aquino (*Bosch*), Betsy Brandt (*Breaking Bad*) and Eleanor Reissa and promises to be as profound, punny and provocative as ever.

The Sisters Rosenweig at South Coast Repertory, 655 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-5555, www.scr.org. 7:30 p.m. Through June 2. $31-$67. —SA DAVIES

[COMEDY]

Just for Laughs

The Coup de Comedy

This annual, four-day, powerhouse event is shockingly underrated, as it continually features way more comedy, workshops and creativity than your average funny fest. Day one brings *Opening Night: An Improvised Musical*, in which *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* house musician Laura Hall leads a cast of expert improvisers through song. Day two includes musical performances, workshops on how to build your own improv characters, and Minority Reportz, an all-female improv showcase. Days three and four offer even more workshops, improv performances and unscripted goodness. For those seeking to learn the ways of improv or just looking to laugh, this free (!) event is a must on your calendar.

The Coup de Comedy at Claire Trevor School of the Arts, 4002 Mesa Rd., Irvine; www.improvrevolution.org. 8 p.m. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

thu/05/10

[FOOD & DRINK]

Big Flavors

Taste of Pacific City

The glittering expanse of outdoor mall Pacific City boasts plenty of trendy, beach-vibe retail shops for those who like to take in ocean views while working out their credit cards, but the real draw of this swank plaza is undoubtedly the hefty number of eateries. Between the hipster food court (with spots belonging to Burnt Crumbs, Frosted Cupcakery, Pie-Not, Portola and more) and contemporary sit-downs (including Ways & Means Oyster House, Backhouse Sushi, and Saint Marc), there are enough restaurants to feed you many meals. But if you prefer a more fast-tack way to eat through Pacific City, consider this tasting event. There are three admission options: Lot 579 tastings (the aforementioned food court), Main Plaza tastings (the sit-down restaurants), or VIP (both sections, plus some other VIP-type permissions). Stretchy pants are encouraged!

Taste of Pacific City at Pacific City, 21010 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, (714) 930-2345, www.gopacificcity.com. VIP, 5 p.m., general admission, 7 p.m. $40-$95. —ERIN DEWITT

PEDRO GUTIERREZ

[LECTURES]

Unsung Heroines

'The Trailblazing Women of Mariachi'

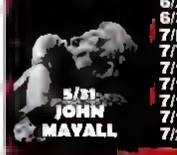
There have been plenty of amazing female vocalists who have donned the charro suit and sung some standards through the years, but despite their talents, the mariachi genre remains dominated by men, and female singers have had to fight a little harder in the industry for respect. Chapman University professor Dr. Leonor Xochitl Perez has thoughtfully archived and researched those who have boldly stepped into the spotlight to sing their hearts out; she offers this thorough presentation of their influence and the challenges they faced from the genre's early beginnings to today.

"The Trailblazing Women of Mariachi" at Chapman University, Leatherby Libraries B3, 1 University Dr., Orange; events.chapman.edu. 6 p.m. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

THE COACH HOUSE

www.thecoachhouse.com

TICKETS and DINNER RESERVATIONS: 949-496-8930



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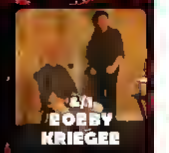
6/5	TYRDHE WELLS
6/6	GDLLECTIVE SOUL
6/8	MADELEINE PEYROUX
5/9	MESHELL HDEGEDCELLO
6/11	LOS RIOS ROCK SCKOOL
6/12	DESPERADD
6/13	OC's FUHHIEST HOUSEWIVES FT. RITA RUDHER
6/16	BLDOD, SWEAT & TEARS
5/16	THE ENGLISH BEAT
3/16	LOS RIOS ROCK SCKOOL
5/20	RAT PACK TRIBUTE
6/24	THE POSIES / TERRA LIGHTFOOT
6/28	DIHGO BDIHGO DAHCE PARTY
6/27	CASH'D DUT
6/29	STEPHEH STILLS & JUDY CDLLIHS
6/30	STEPHEH STILLS & JUDY CDLLIHS
6/31	JDHH MAYALL
6/1	RD6BY KRIEGER
6/2	QUEEH NATIDH
6/7	ULI JDH RDTH - 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF ELECTRIC SUN AND TOKYO TAPES
6/8	BEATLES vs STONES
5/9	THE PETTY BREAKERS
6/10	MARTY MCIHTOSH
6/14	CASEY ABRAMS
6/15	JACK RUSSELL'S GREAT WHITE
6/18	AL JARDINE & PERFORMING FROM CALIFORNIA FROM THE VERY FIRST SONG WITH A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE BEACH BOYS
6/17	DOUG STARKS PRESENTS GD MEDY HIGHT
6/21	HAHCY WILSOH OF HEART ON SALE 5/5
6/22	GARY HDEY
6/23	LOS RIOS ROCK SCKOOL
6/27	TED HUGENT
6/26	TED HUGENT
6/29	SERPEHTIHE FIRE
6/30	LIVE DEAD & RIDER5 '66
7/8	GUH BDAT KIHGS
7/7	YOUHG DUBLIHERS
7/13	COCD MDHTOYA
7/14	GUITAR LEGEDD DICK DALE
7/15	RITA CODLIDGE
7/16	LITTLE RIVER BAND
7/20	SUPER DIAMOHD



UPCOMING SHOWS

7/22	THE FIXX ON SALE 5/4
7/28	PATTY SMYTH & SCAHDAL
7/27	HEHRY RAPDHD
6/3	VEHICE
8/4	ABBAFAB
8/5	RDHHIE SPECTDR & THE RDHETTES
8/10	GEDFF TATE
8/16	IRDH BUTTERFLY
8/25	HDHK
8/30	MIDGE URE AND PAUL YOUHG
9/1	WILD CHILD
9/7	JUSTIH HAYWARD
9/21	HERMAH'S HERMITS FEAT. PETER HDDHE
9/22	HERMAH'S HERMITS FEAT. PETER HDDHE
9/30	AHHA HALICK
10/12	JD SDUTHER
10/14	THE DUKE RDBILLARD BAHD
10/25	TAB BEHOIT'S WHISKEY BAYOU REVUE
10/26	FIVE FOR FIGHTIHG ON SALE 5/4
11/3	AMBRDSIA
11/15	THE KIHGSTDN TRIO
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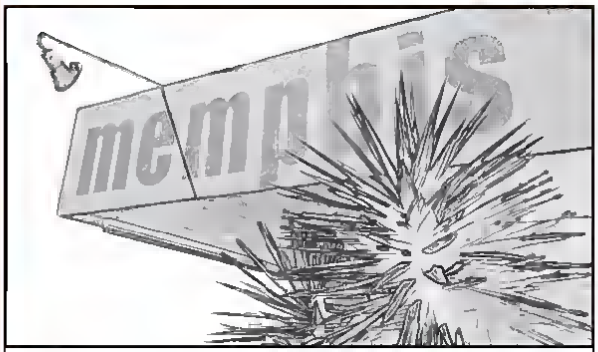

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Urbanaanaheim.com
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Crackshack.com
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Restauranthabana.com
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5914, 2920 Bristol St., Costa Mesa
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2937 Bristol St A102, Costa Mesa
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Price: $$$

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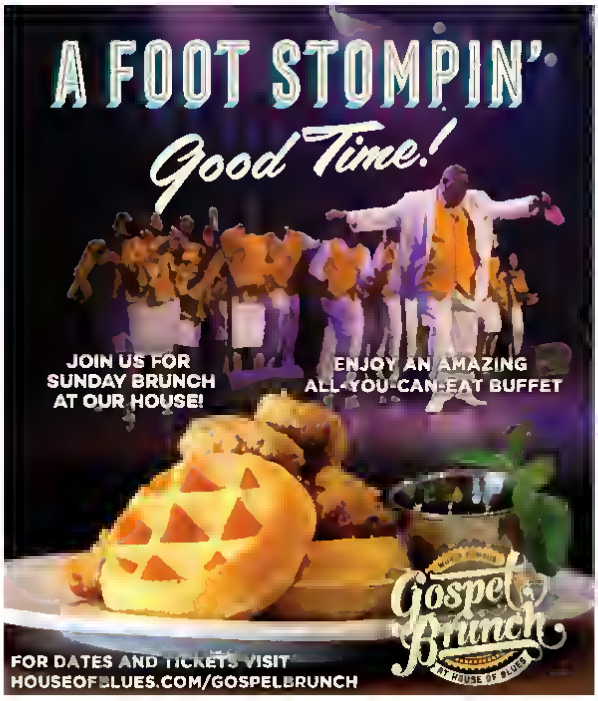

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The-breakfast-bar.com
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Billysatthebeach.net
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Bosscatkitchen.com
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Lidobottleworks.com
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Pandorbakery.com
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Cannerynewport.com
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Truefoodkitchen.com
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451 Newport Center Dr., Newport Beach
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6410 E Chapman Ave., Orange
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Kimmie's Coffee Cup Editorial Pick

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Killing Me Soufflé

Basilur Tea & Coffee serves Japanese soufflé pancakes in Buena Park

BY EDWIN GOEI

If you keep up with Japanese culinary trends on YouTube and Instagram, you've no doubt heard about the soufflé pancake. It's the subject of numerous how-to videos, a lot of them featuring overhead shots of mixing bowls. Buzzfeed's Tasty did a version back in 2016. But if you believe the other videos that show people going around eating them in Tokyo, the souffle pancake is the "it" food of the moment; it has apparently reached the Cronut Phase there, with hour-long lines at the most popular pancake shops.

Those who haven't seen the videos or Instagram posts might wonder, "What's so special about these pancakes?" The answer is *everything*. They aren't so much breakfast food as they are dessert. The defining characteristic is the fluffiness. According to YouTube celebs such as Simon and Martina, eating one is akin to consuming a pancake made of clouds. They're also tall and thick—the phrase "flat as a pancake" loses all meaning. Think of a Hostess Ding Dong, or perhaps an actual souffle. A single Japanese soufflé pancake has the height of an entire stack at IHOP. This is thanks to the air folded into the batter by way of whipped egg whites.

I've now tasted these pancakes. And I didn't have to go to Japan. I found the pancakes in Buena Park at Basilur Tea & Coffee, which is, to my knowledge, the first and so far only place in Orange County that makes them. They're served three to an order, one leaning on the other as if fallen dominos. From afar, they resemble morbidly obese English muffins, but up close, they jiggle like Jell-O.

The texture is ethereal but eggy, like custard made of foam. It definitely inspires comparisons to clouds, down comforters, and other soft-and-fluffy things. At its best, Basilur's soufflé pancake is also moist, with the air bubbles forming a feathery matrix somewhere between a fresh marshmallow and the top of a lemon meringue pie. At its worst, it can be wet in the middle if the uncooked froth hasn't quite set. Since each one is cooked on a griddle, I suppose the inconsistency is to be expected—they are still pancakes.

And since they are still pancakes, a serving comes with a dollop of velvety whipped cream and a gravy boat of maple syrup that I don't recommend using. The syrup overpowers the delicate sweetness and, worse, deflates the pancake. And when you're paying $13 for the experience, the last thing you want to do is turn the dish into something out of a Denny's Grand Slam.

FLUFFJACKS

EDWIN GOEI

Since they're so light, the pancakes barely qualify as sustenance. If it's the only thing you order for breakfast, you're going to feel peckish afterward. At Basilur, you have a few meal options to consider. You could order one of the eggs Benedicts, but they're basic, with nothing particularly special or noteworthy about them. In the version I had, the ham was an afterthought, and the egg still barbored some of the poaching liquid. Also, if you're keen on runny yolks, Basilur leans toward leaving them virtually raw. Upon piercing mine, a torrent of yellow flooded my plate. Soon, it became impossible to tell Hollandaise from egg yolk. What the English muffin didn't soak up I repurposed as dressing for the pile of salad greens that dominated the dish.

You should probably skip the burrata salad, which consists of mostly butter lettuce and two tiny morsels of the soft cheese for $12. I noticed the chef took the effort to top them with caviar-like beads of balsamic vinegar made by spherification—a trick right out of the molecular-gastronomy playbook—but even with the add-on, it's not worth the price.

In fact, unless you're going to do the $25-per-person Tea Time Set—for which finger sandwiches, scones and pastries arrive on one of those ornate silver towers—you're better off just enjoying Basilur Tea & Coffee for its drinks, especially the tea. This cafe, which is a branch of the Sri Lanka-based tea brand, has at least 15 flavors that start with Ceylon black tea, for which the country is well-known. The Earl Grey is so floral sipping it is equivalent to burying your face in potpourri.

So far, in addition to this store at the Source, Basilur has a café just like this in Seoul, but because of that pancake and the presence of kakigori, a shaved-ice dessert made from milk tea, you have to conclude it's Japanese more than anything. That afternoon, I saw every customer Instagramming the souffle pancake. It's only a matter of time before it goes viral here, as it has in Tokyo. Mark my words.

BASILUR TEA & COFFEE
6920 Beach Blvd., Ste. K129, Buena Park, (714) 870-5550. Open Sun.-Thurs., 9 a.m.-10 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 9 a.m.-11 p.m. Souffle pancakes, $13-$15; tea drinks, $5. No alcohol.

WHAT THE ALE

» SARAH BENNETT

Mexican Beer's New Home

EL INDIO BOTANAS Y CERVEZA
309 W. Third St., Santa Ana, (714) 547-7868

Not too long ago, the only way to drink the stellar stouts and session IPAs from Baja California's burgeoning craft beer scene was to trek across the border. Since Mexican breweries need a pricy liquor license to sell their own products, this usually meant stopping at one of the few laid-back craft-beer bars or a romp through Tijuana's Plaza Fiesta, the mall of nightclubs that at one point was overrun with nearly a dozen pop-up tasting rooms.

But in the past year or two, some of Baja's biggest and best breweries—such as Tijuana's Insurgente, Ensenada's Agua Mala and Fauna from Mexicali—began ramping up distribution into SoCal. And a recent visit to Plaza Fiesta found only a few remaining tasting rooms (including Insurgente's) amid a handful of new nightclub stalls.

As the Baja craft-beer scene morphs out of infancy and breweries shift from a power-in-numbers approach to individualized branding and dissemination, it's time to give thanks to OC-based distributor GRDLOC, which has turned *la Naranja* into a stateside haven for Baja's best beer.

Case in point: El Indio Botanas y Cerveza in SanTana—the only bar we can find in the whole country with a tap list of exclusively Baja-brewed *cerveza artesenal*. Its 12 handles haven't rotated much since opening in October, but the beers are all solid, year-round efforts from the only five breweries legally allowed to distribute in the U.S.

There's Wendlandt's hoppy amber ale Humpy Humpy; Insurgente's flagship IPA Lupulosa; Border Psycho's meaty, 12.1 percent ABV Belgian-style quad; and—a rare seasonal—Agua Mala's double IPA collaboration with Widmer Brothers Brewing, Widmenda.

The music is all vinyl, the food is all cheap bar snacks, and the casual setup of simple wooden tables and a string-lights-swaddled patio is all you need to fuel as if you're right back at Plaza Fiesta.

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

SARAH BENNETT

ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

Buzz, Buzz, Buzz!

A guide to great beans in OC

BY ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

Coffee, coffee, coffee! Buzz, buzz, buzz! We can't seem to get enough of fine beans and perfect-temp water. There's no shortage of caffeinated joints to choose from in OC, but here's a handful to explore the next time you need a fix.

BAKERY HABANA

If Cuban-inspired everything is your jam, then here's your second home. Beyond the dining room and endless patios of the Spectrum's hot spot lies a quick-service counter to fulfill your cravings. There are take-away lunch items, but you'll want to hover over the pastry case and fill a pretty pink box with one of everything. Savor the temporary escape provided by a café con leche or cortadito Cubano with a guava cream cheese danish. *708 Spectrum Center Dr., Irvine, (949) 419-0100, www.bakeryhabana.com.*

BASILUR TEA & COFFEE

Coffee and tea options are all but expected at most malls, but in the concrete jungle known as the Source OC, there's more than one spot. However, you'll find us on the street level, gazing into the navy-and-marble interior of Basilur. It provides so much more than caffeine: tiramisu, soufflé pancakes, ube ice cream specials, even royal milk teas—don't be surprised if you can't make up your mind. For your friend who doesn't do any of that, there are tea cocktails with no alcohol, caffeine or powder. For more about those wonderful soufflé pancakes, check out Edwin Goei's review in this issue. *6920 Beach Blvd., Ste. K129, Buena Park, (949) 838-7330, www.basilurusa.com.*

COFFEE DOSE

Tucked inside a hair salon, Coffee Dose's go-to description of its goods is better known as "Anti-Bitch Serum." Grab and go, or stay Eastside and head over to a patio for some "me time." Common Room Roasters handles the beans, and a specialty is the Mary Jane, featuring CBD oil and a killer stencil. Also noteworthy: Nut milks and vegan doughnuts are available. *116 E. 18th St., Costa Mesa, www.coffeedosecm.com.*

MORNING LAVENDER

Coffee and retail therapy is a match made in heaven. Throw in an afternoon tea and an Instagrammable wall, and everybody's flocking to this super-cute Old Town Tustin shop. If time isn't on your side, pick up the lavender latte, a subtly sweet compliment to the everyday version. *330 El Camino Real, Tustin, (714) 486-1429, www.morninglavender.com.*

PILGRIM'S COFFEE HOUSE

Coffee time in downtown Fullerton can be difficult to navigate. Yet recently opened Pilgrim's takes an unfussy approach. Grab your laptop and head to this industrial-chic space for a cafe au lait. Cool down with your choice of a nitro or a house cold brew. Or go on a complete tangent and order a 100 percent crushed-fruit smoothie. *124 W. Wilshire Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-7338.*

TIERRA MIA COFFEE

Celebrating 10 years in business, this successful brand ventured into OC for the first time in March. Eschew the convenient drive-thru window, as the interior is even more inviting. Give in to the horchata frappe, but save room for a churro muffin. Await the impending sugar rush—and crash. Bonus: Tierra Mia's hours of operation are better than most. *1315 W. Whittier Blvd., La Habra, www.tierramiacoffee.com.*

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Endless Summer Sammich

River Street reuben at Tower 48

DELI-LICIOUS
CYNTHIA REBOLLEDO

The newly opened Tower 48 serves up modern deli fare with an added twist. The Newport Beach eatery from Andrew Dorsey (SOCIAL Costa Mesa) and Dan Biello (Chronic Tacos co-founder) offers a variety of delectable sides, including loaded Tower fries (thick-cut taters served with bacon jam, melted American cheese, pickled red Fresno chiles, green onion and crema) and beach fruit (diced papaya, mango, pineapple and crunchy jicama, plus shaved coconut, all finished with a touch of citrus and tart hibiscus dust for the ultimate refreshing beach side snack). While these are great starters, the best dish is the River Street reuben.

Cured in-house and slow-roasted for five hours, the deep-pink corned-beef brisket is seasoned in a blend of spiced mustard seeds, celery, onion and carrots until soft and tender. The meat is sliced to a medium thickness and tucked between toasted slices of marbled rye with rich provolone, a hearty heap of sauerkraut (pickled and fermented on the premises) and tangy Thousand Island dressing for the perfect meld of sweet, salty and fatty. Only 16 of these sandwiches are available each day, so make sure to get your hands on one before hitting the waves.

TOWER 48
4525 W. Coast Hwy., Newport Beach, (949) 432-5858; tower48newportbeach.com

EatThisNow

» CYNTHIA REBOLLEDO

DrinkoftheWeek

» ROBERT FLORES

Cerveza Respeto by Mason Ale Works

ROBERT FLORES

Since opening two years ago, the Wall in Old Towne Orange has become beer nerds' go-to place. President Dan Martinez, co-owner Ryan Sauter and regional manager Mike Long keep the Wall stocked with the latest craft brews. They've also installed self-serve taps, allowing you to pour your own tasters and full pints, while a card tracks the amounts and charges you per ounce. It's a fun way to explore the vast menu of brews.

IPAs will always be *numero uno* to me, but it's nice to occasionally enjoy a refreshing, crisp lager. Local craft breweries have been brewing their own takes on Mexican-style lagers with huge success, and Mason Ale Works' Cerveza Respeto is a great example.

THE DRINK

The 4.5 percent ABV brew took home a gold medal in the Mexican-style lager category at the recent Ensenada Beer Fest. Mason Ale Works uses German Magnum and Hersbrucker hops with Pilsner and Vienna malts in homage to the original Mexican lagers, brewed by German and Austrian immigrants in Mexico in the mid-1800s. Cerveza Respeto has a full body of flavor that's crisp, with delicious malt tones and hints of corn. You can find cans of the beer at Total Wine & More, or step up your Cinco de Drinko game at the Wall.

THE WALL
80 Plaza Square, Orange, (714) 988-7700, thewallrestaurant.com

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OC WEEKLY

MARVEL STUDIOS

Films in Spaaaaace!

How we'd launch Starship Frida: 12-Hour intergalactic Sci-Fi Marathon

BY AIMEE MURILLO AND MATT COKER

Starship Frida: 12-Hour Intergalactic Sci-Fi Marathon launches Friday night at the Frida Cinema in Santa Ana with Joss Whedon's *Serenity* before splashing down after the end credits of Luc Besson's *The Fifth Element* Saturday morning. But Frida wants the other four movies in between to be a surprise, so we put on our crash-helmet thinking caps to come up with our desired overnight lineups.

GALACTIC EMPIRE EXECUTOR MURILLO

10 p.m., ***Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*** (109 minutes) This offbeat, British sci-fi cult comedy based on the book series has all the makings of a good time—an out-of-this-world storyline; a string of madcap, quirky interstellar characters (some played by Mos Def and Zooey Deschanel, plus Stephen Fry as narrator), and even an existential quandary of the universe. It's funny, insightful and so well-written it'll make new fans out of audience members who haven't already seen it.

Midnight, ***Alien*** (117 minutes) It's only fitting that we go into the dark side of space at the midnight hour, and *Alien* is the best film to take us there. Ridley Scott's 1979 masterpiece is one of the best films in both the sci-fi and horror genres, and it's a great change of pace from the previous two flicks. Here, we get to see Sigourney Weaver play the badass crew member of the *Nostromo* pitted against an H.R. Giger-designed deadly alien lurking aboard her ship. Even if people have trouble staying awake throughout the film's quieter, tension-ridden moments, you just know audiences will be keeping their eyes peeled for that one stomach-bursting scene.

2 a.m., ***Galaxy Quest*** (102 minutes) What better film to cleanse your palate after getting the wits scared out of you than this 1999 campy comedy ribbing pop-culture fans, *Star Trek* and campy space comedies in general? Not to mention, it's a treat to see Weaver do a complete 180 and have some fun in space. This film has the right balance of absurdity with some equally thrilling adventure sequences, star turns by Tim Allen, Alan Rickman, Tony Shalhoub, Sam Rockwell and Justin Long; and the cheesy but well-meaning slogan "Never give up, never surrender!"

4 a.m., ***Guardians of the Galaxy*** (125 minutes) Still awake? Methinks a Marvel-produced superhero-space-adventure flick would be the best thing to keep people up and energized at this hour. As one of the more pleasing and well-received films in the Marvel franchise, this one brings in a star-studded cast to play a team of galactic miscreants forced to work together to save the universe from a tyrannical warrior. Who needs coffee when you can watch riveting, CGI-laden spaceflight scenes for a couple of hours?

SUPREME BASHAR COKER

10 p.m., ***The World's End*** (109 minutes) Because a Whedon film begins the marathon, I wanted to follow it up with sci-fi from another director who possesses a rabid fan base. And Edgar Wright is who sprang to mind. The criminally underappreciated 2013 capper to his trilogy with Simon Pegg and Nick Frost has five friends in their forties reuniting to re-enact an epic pub crawl from 20 years before. However, their final destination—the World's End pub—takes on a literal meaning when the twizzled team staggers into an alien invasion.

Midnight, ***Aliens*** (137 minutes) Point of order, Cosmic Command Council: Aimee stole my midnight movie! So, I'll raise you an *Alien* with James Cameron's equally classic 1986 sequel that has Weaver's Ripley awakened 57 years after she was *Nostromo*'s lone survivor. Her corporate overlords, who had been skeptical of her claims regarding what wiped out her crew, convince her to join an investigatory expedition to the same planet that originally sent *Nostromo* a distress signal. Please ignore the fact that *Aliens* rolled at Frida in March.

2 a.m., ***Thor: Ragnarok*** (130 minutes) From a 24-hour "rockathon" fundraiser, at which donations increased the longer each rocking-chair occupant stayed awake, I know that despite reaching the bitter end (thank you, caffeine pills washed down with Red Bull), no memory remains of what transpired between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. Mumbling nonsense in a foreign accent seems to have happened. Anyway, I can say the same thing about missing a sizable middle chunk of this 2017 Marvel hit. Parts I do remember were very funny. The point is, marathons require secret power naps. Wait … that was Cate Blanchett?!

4 a.m., ***District 9*** (112 minutes) If you were to ask me to name my favorite sci-fi flick of the moment (and one that will definitely keep you awake), my answer would be South Africa's most popular movie from that genre (and horror). Twenty-eight years after occupying a massive ship stranded over Johannesburg, aliens inhabit a militarized ghetto known as District 9. A multinational munitions corporation is contracted to evict these so-called "Prawns," but the man in charge of the operation is exposed to a strange alien chemical that has him seeking help from two refugees. Director/co-writer Neill Blomkamp delivered such a fresh vision that he was quickly snatched up to helm *Elysium* and *Chappie*.

AMURILLO@OCWEEKLY.COM
MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

STARSHIP FRIDA: 12-HOUR INTERGALACTIC SCI-FI MARATHON
at the Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 8 p.m. $20

That Is Not a Golden Snitch

BY MATT COKER

FATHOM EVENTS

The Endless. Filmmakers Justin Benson and Aaron Moorhead star as grown brothers who escaped a death cult as children but return 10 years later. *The Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., May 3, 1:30, 4 & 7:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

Final Portrait. Stanley Tucci examines the artistic process through the relationship of artist Alberto Giacometti and American writer and art-lover James Lord. *Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 438-5435. Thurs., May 3, 2, 4:15 & 6:30 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Grace Jones: Bloodlight and Bami. Director Sophie Fiennes spent five years with the pop-culture mega-icon to present her public and private worlds. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., May 3, 2, 7 & 9:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

Community Voices Documentary Screening and Filmmaker Q&A. Through Community Voices, groups of Chapman University students are assigned an Orange County organization to produce a short character-driven portrait film of that nonprofit. *Chapman University Dodge College of Film and Media Arts, Marion Knott Studios, Folino Theater, 283 N. Cypress St., Orange, (714) 997-6765, chapman.edu/dodge/. Thurs., May 3, 7 p.m. Free.*

Like Arrows: Parenting Is a Journey. Kevin Peeples explores the joys and heartaches of parenting. *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., May 3, 7 p.m. $12.50.*

Redes (Fishermen's Nets/The Wave). From 1937 comes Emilio Gomez Muriel and Fred Zinnemann's vivid documentary-like dramatization of the daily grind of men struggling to make a living by fishing on the Gulf of Mexico. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., May 3, reception, 7 p.m., screening, 7:30 p.m. Free.*

2018 Newport Beach Film Festival. The 2018 run of parties, seminars and more than 350 short, documentary and narrative feature films from around the world officially closes with the screening of *All Square* and after-party. *Newport Beach Film Festival closes at Regency Lido Theater, 3459 Via Lido, Newport Beach (949) 573-8350; www.newportbeachfilmfest.com. Thurs., May 3, 8 p.m. $95 ticket includes admission to official closing-night party at Via Lido Plaza, 3425 Via Lido, Newport Beach, www.newportbeachfilmfest.com. 10 p.m. $65 (gala only). 21+. Cocktail attire required; coats or jackets recommended, as it is an outdoor event.*

Isle of Dogs. By executive decree, all the canine pets of Megasaki City have been exiled to a vast garbage dump called Trash Island. *Art Theatre, (562) 438-5435. Thurs., May 3, 8:30 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Tschick (Goodbye Berlin). Two teenage outsiders from Berlin go on an eccentric road trip through East Germany during the summer holidays. *Long Beach City College, LAC Campus, 4901 E. Carson St., Bldg. D, Room 135, Long Beach, (562) 938-4111. Fri., 6 p.m. Free. Event parking is free starting at 4 p.m. in lots H, I, F and G.*

Senior Thesis Cycle 7 Film Screenings. Student-made films are also live streamed. (Go to the website below, scroll to the screening event and click the link.) *Chapman University, Dodge College of Film and Media Arts, Marion Knott Studios, Folino Theater, 283 N. Cypress St., Orange, (714) 997-6765, chapman.edu/dodge/. Fri., 7 p.m. Free.*

Starship Frida: 12-Hour Intergalactic Sci-Fi Marathon! It's an overnight cinematic space expedition that kicks off with Joss Whedon's *Serenity* (2005) and closes with Luc Besson's *The Fifth Element* (1997). Promised in between are surprises, giveaways and four other classic sci-fi flicks. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 8 p.m. $20.*

Grad Thesis Cycle 5, 6 & 7 Film Screenings. Graduate-student films premiere. *Chapman University, Dodge College of Film and Media Arts, Marion Knott Studios, Folino Theater, (714) 997-6765, chapman.edu/dodge/. Sat., 7 p.m. Free.*

Bungou Stray Dogs: Dead Apple. The Armed Detective Industry is tasked with saving Yokohama when a power struggle tips in favor of the enemies of those with supernatural powers. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sat., 7:30 p.m., Sun., 5:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Shadow cast Midnight Insanity performs in front of the screen. *Art Theatre, (562) 438-5435. Sat., 11:55 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Love & Bananas: An Elephant Story. World-renowned Asian elephant conservationist Lek Chailert and a team of rescuers embark on a daring, 48-hour, 500-mile mission across Thailand to free from captivity a 70-year-old blind Asian elephant. *Art Theatre, (562) 438-5435. Sun., 11 a.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Candle in the Wave. UC Irvine's Center for Critical Korean Studies presents this omnibus documentary project by the People's Action for Immediate Resignation of President Park Geun-hey in South Korea. *UC Irvine, Humanities Instructional Building 110, Irvine, (949) 824-6117. Mon., 2-5 p.m. Free.*

Graduate Thesis Documentaries. Documentaries by graduate students are also live streamed. *Chapman University, Dodge College of Film and Media Arts, Marion Knott Studios, Folino Theater, (714) 997-6765, chapman.edu/dodge/. Mon., 7 p.m. Free.*

The Boxcar Children: *Surprise Island.* The Alden children spend the summer on a private island, where a kind stranger is always around to help them out. But does this new friend have a secret? *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Tues., 4 p.m. $10-$12.50.*

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. It's the 1990 original that pits Michelangelo, Leonardo, Donatello and Raphael against the mysterious Foot Clan ransacking the city. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, 25471 Rancho Niguel Rd., Laguna Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Tues., 7:30 p.m. $8.*

***Puffs:* Filmed Live Off Broadway.** This stage production, which was filmed for simulcast in theaters nationwide, is about a group known as the Puffs who were also at Hogwarts. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Wed., 7 p.m., also May 12, 12:55 p.m. $18.*

The Princess Bride. Swashbuckler Westley tries to save his childhood sweetheart from marrying a real douche. *Regency South Coast Village, 1561 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 557-5701. Wed., 7:30 p.m. $9.*

Les Miserables. Tom Hooper's 2012 adaptation of the Broadway musical. You can bring light snacks and covered beverages to this screening, but alcohol is not allowed. *Fullerton Public Library, 353 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-6327. Thurs., May 10, 1 p.m. Free.*

Animation/VFX Thesis Films. Senior filmmakers premiere their works. *Chapman University, Dodge College of Film and Media Arts, Marion Knott Studios, Folino Theater, (714) 997-6765, chapman.edu/dodge/. Thurs., May 10, 6:30 p.m. Free.*

Digimon Adventure: tri.: Coexistence. The arrival of rampaging Meicoomon starts the countdown to the real world's collapse. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., May 10, 7:30 p.m. $12.50.*

Dirtbag: The Legend of Fred Beckey. Beckey's stubborn, singular quest to conquer peaks meant a solitary life on the road, where he left a long trail of scorned climbing partners and lost lovers in his wake." *Sender One Climbing, 1441 S. Village Way, Santa Ana, (714) 881-3456, dirtbagmovie.com. Thurs., May 10, 7:30 p.m. $15-$20.*

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

People Are Pee-ple

A dystopian *Urinetown: The Musical* deluges STAGEStheatre

BY JOEL BEERS

Fans of *Urinetown, The Musical*—and I count myself as one of those fervid believers—look forward to each new production as eagerly as if they are a kid on the night before going to Disneyland (before they realize it sucks) or a 15-year-old gearing up for his first dry bump. It's a time of frenzied expectations and deep crushes and outright giddiness.

And then you see a first act such as the one in this current show at STAGEStheatre in Fullerton, with its clunky set changes and stumbly dance numbers, performers with all the charisma of Ben Carson, and piped-in music that drowns out the few voices capable of projecting. It's enough to make you wonder what the hell you were thinking falling for this not-so-hot mess in the first place.

Fortunately, things pick up in the second act; this Mark Hollmann and Greg Kotis anti-musical is just too good to stay mediocre for too long. STAGES' production may not be the best introduction to this incredibly witty and fun show, but even die-hard fans will walk out remembering why they fell in love.

As the name implies, *Urinetown* is not typical fodder for the musical stage. Set in a dystopian future (that unfortunately does not look too far-fetched) in which a drought has sucked the water table dry and one of the biggest sources of revenue is charging people to use public toilets, it's a delirious eff-you to the traditional musical, constantly calling attention to itself, dispensing with any pretense of happy endings, and gleefully flushing anything close to good taste down the drain.

But it's also an exceptionally well-written show, with a score that recalls everything from *Guys and Dolls* to the Fosse jazz hands of *West Side Story*. And all of it is set against the backdrop of revolutionary fervor as a ragtag group of nobodies rallies to confront the evil, Capitalistic piss-baron and his corrupt paid-for police force.

After logistical and projection problems in the first act, this Edgar Andrew Torrens-directed show rises to the occasion in the frenetic second act, as the militants, led by Bobby Strong (Brian Wiegel), scheme, kidnap and bicker their way to a volatile face-off with Caldwell B. Cladwell (a show-stealing Brian J. Cook).

It's an enormous cast (18 actors!), and while the aforementioned Bobby is the show's heroic protagonist, with Cladwell its antagonist, the play is really about its co-narrators: Officer Lockstock (Garrett Chandler), a bumbling, baton-wielding stooge, and Little Sally (Nicole Abarca Powell) a hyper-intelligent street urchin.

COURTESY OF STAGESTHEATRE

These two are the meta forces at work, breaking things down for the audience while adding their own comic allusions to the proceedings. Though their relationship, or lack thereof, is central to this play (and more than a little creepy at times), Chandler and Powell lack chemistry, and rather than seeming integral to the show, their characters feel less than fully formed.

Ranging widely in skill, the ensemble are nonetheless all gung-ho, diving into the seedy sensibilities of the play. Particular standouts are Lindsey Eubanks as Bobby's mother; Emily Curington as the pregnant Little Becky Two Shoes; and Mario Andrew Vargas Jr. as her manic mate, Hot Blades Harry, who nails the second-act showstopper "Snuff That Girl."

First staged in 2001, the cult show became an enormous hit with three Tony Award nominations, it predated Occupy by about 10 years, but there's a definite Occupy aroma to the festivities—and not just the lack of public toilets in esch case. Gouged, taxed and dismissed by their corporate overlords and the politicians in their pocket, the people rise up to demand change and actually take over one of the main factors of production: toilets. Whereas Occupy ultimately fizzled out, though it laid seeds that are still germinating today, the poor in *Urinetown* actually make things worse. And even though Cladwell—as well as Cook's bravura performance, which is equal parts Foghorn Leghorn and the old fucker in *It's a Wonderful Life*—make it very easy to detest the guy, it is alluded to in the play's end that while a greedy and merciless urine baron, he actually did some good, albeit at the expense of a great deal of human life.

But drawing any significant real-life parallels to the antics of *Urinetown* kind of defeats the whole satire. There are no truly good guys or girls in this show, nor any truly evil people (even though the skull-cracking cops certainly don't seem to have a redemptive quality), and just as this show ebulliently dispenses with the happy-ever-after trope, it also sends a spike through the heart of the us-vs.-them mentality that so much highbrow—and lowbrow—literary examinations of social justice are suffused with. People are people, some of us just pee a little freer than others. That's something to remember in Trump America 2018, which makes the offal in *Urinetown* seem tame in comparison.

URINETOWN: THE MUSICAL
at STAGEStheatre, 400 E. Commonwealth, Fullerton, (714) 525-4484; stagesoc.org
Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m.
Through May 20. $20-$22.

ARTSOVERLOAD

» AIMEE MURILLO

May 4-10

ADVENTURE FILM FESTIVAL. Flicks and activities inspired by travel, health and environmental activism from a global roster of independent filmmakers. Fri., 5:30 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m. $15-$60. Muckenthaler Cultural Center, 1201 W. Malvern Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-6595; themuck.org.

"ART OF ALEX LOPEZ". Lead singer of death-metal band Suicide Silence presents a solo show of his personal, darkly occult paintings. Open Tues.-Sat., noon-7 p.m., Sun., noon-5 p.m. Through Thurs., May 10. Free. Dark Art Emporium, 256 Elm Ave., Long Beach, (562) 612-1118; www.darkartemporium.com.

EVITA. Classic musical based on the life of Eva Perón, the lively and beloved First Lady of Argentina in the 1940s. Fri.-Sat., 7:30 p.m., Sun., 2 p.m. Through May 6. $21-$23. Golden West College Mainstage Theater, 15751 Gothard St., Huntington Beach, (714) 895-8150; www.gwctheater.com.

"THE FLOWER POLAROIDS". Michael Hamish paints and collages dreamlike images of California-based flowers and plants based on Polaroid and vintage film photography. Open Tues.-Sun., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Through May 31. saltfineart, 396 N. Pacific Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 715-5554; saltfineart.net.

"GORB IN THE SCHIZOPHRENIC LINGUIVERSE". This presentation of a novel by J. Martin Strangeweather with illustrations by Richie Godey, featuring a weird, experimental storyline and otherworldly characters, includes an ink and screenprint show and photography by Ana Nevarrete. Fri., 6-10 p.m. Free. Hibbleton Gallery, 223 W. Santa Fe Ave., Fullerton, (951) 316-7079; hibbleton.com.

"MAX BLOOM'S PRESENTS: SUZETTE HODNETT". A comprehensive solo show focusing on work made during the last four years of the artist's cancer recovery. Open Mon.-Fri., 3-10 p.m., Sat., 5-10 p.m. Through May 31. Free. Max Blooms Cafe Noir, 220 N. Maiden Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7600; www.facebook.com/maxbloomsnoir/.

RANCHO DAYS FIESTA. All-day family-friendly event exploring the rancho days of Orange County with fun and educational activities, tours and performances. Sat., 11 a.m. $5. Heritage Hill Historical Park, 25151 Serrano Rd., Lake Forest, (949) 923-2230; www.ocparks.com/historic/heritage/.

"TATTOO FLASH ART EXHIBIT". Original art by local tattooists, along with paintings and ink drawings. Sat., 6 p.m., also by appointment. Through May 26. Free. Catalyst Gallery at Art Supply Warehouse, 6672 Westminster Blvd., Westminster, (714) 891-3626; www.artsupplywarehouse.com/catalyst.php.

UPTOWN VILLAGE MARKET. The bi-annual crafters showcase includes more than 100 art, food, jewelry and other vendors. Fri., 5-10 p.m.; Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Expo Center, 4321 Atlantic Ave., Long Beach; www.uptownvillagemarket.com.

OCWEEKLY Bulletin

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Upcoming Events

Cinco De Mayo at Golden Road Pub
Saturday, 11AM - 11:30PM, Orange CA

Cinco de Mayo Yacht Party - Night
Sat, 7 -10PM
The Royal Princess, Newport Beach
Tix at AnnualYachtParties.com

Cinco de Mayo with Flashpants
at Gallagher's Irish Pub & Grill
Saturday, 9AM, Gallagher's Huntington Beach
Tix at Ticketfly.com

Messages

GIA

Gia is a magnificent big boned 5 year old girl who is incredibly smart. This girl needs a job to do! She is very strong and activa and requires someone with previous shepherd experience. Gia knows many commands and she is eager to please. She is not good with other dogs or cats, so requires a home where she can be the queen. Gia would thrive in a home that understands the complex nature of the German Shepherd. To learn more about her please visit gsroc.org

Featured This Week

mesalounge Our dining room is equipped with the largest #succulent and a retractable roof to watch the stars. Bring on the #goodvibes for any night of the week! 📷 @annewatsonphoto 🌵 #mesalounge #thismustbetheplace #costsamesa

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THE BRUISE BROTHERS

RICK HOSTAGE

Sjobeck Strikes Again

For a veteran OC punk, Mesa Lanes are a new band with a fresh start

BY NATE JACKSON

For plenty of punk bands, reinvention is the mother of necessity. Reliving the glory days by trading on a moniker that brought them popularity is a way to come out of retirement with guns blazing. It's about feeling important again. For Nick Sjobeck, one of OC's most infamous punks and the founder of '90s Costa Mesa band Dodge Dart, returning to music after a long hiatus was mostly about feeling whole again—which meant starting from scratch with a brand-new name.

"So many members were in Dodge Dart—it was a fun band and really cool, but we wanted to start fresh," Sjobeck says. "We wanted it to be just a one-lineup band with a bunch of new songs."

The band that gained rabid popularity back in the mid-'90s with their melodic OC punk sound went through roughly 20 or so members and countless dramatic periods. There's no question that Sjobeck loved that band, as well as the legendary Electric Cool-Aide, for which he played bass alongside Anton Newcombe of the Brian Jonestown Massacre. But the music back then was also closely tied to many of Sjobeck's memories of drug addiction, jail time and personal derailment. After his last experience in custody, he vowed to clean his life up.

"I had two young kids at the time, and I didn't see myself ever going back to jail, and there I was with warrants out, and I knew I was going to jail—I had to turn myself in," Sjobeck says. "It's a bad feeling when you have an 8-year-old and an 11-year-old. I got clean in 2010, turned myself in and have been sober ever since."

On a recent Saturday afternoon, Sjobeck is sitting at a table outside Kéan Coffee in Costa Mesa, sporting thick-rimmed glasses and an LA Rams cap. Beside him, longtime friend and now band mate Duke Seino sits white-haired, bespectacled and cross-legged, two aging punks trading stories that brought them out of musical retirement to collaborate again, this time alongside drummer Ian McNasty and bassist Tony Morebouse as Mesa Lanes.

For Sjobeck, it was a commitment to living sober and loving life after a life in the penal system finally forced him to change. Seino's return to music was a social and spiritual awakening: the need to not only touch a guitar again, but also rip the shit out of it. Several years later, both of those crusades met in the middle of Mesa Lanes' debut album, *High Crimes & Misdemeanors*, out now on Hostage Records.

Stoked by the bipartisan fury of the Trump era and the agitation of society's flame-war interactions that leave everyone on edge these days, the record is a four-chord tour de force coated with wisdom and tasteful guitarwork, featuring memorable hooks on songs such as "Building a Wall," "Already Dead" and "Does Anybody Think About Me?" The latter tune is Sjobeck's remembrance of the OC he grew up in, one that has long been paved over, with rough neighborhoods now strip malls. These days, weathered, middle-class character is systematically swapped for something cute that serves coffee.

"So much has changed, but everyone has stories about their old neighborhood," Sjobeck says. That includes the name of the band itself, as they were christened after an old Costa Mesa bowling alley that Sjobeck frequented in his adolescence, one where he and his brother would go to loiter, steal people's shoes and, yes, sometimes go bowling. "It used to be a bowling alley on 17th Street years ago," Sjobeck says. "Nobody remembers it. They remember Kona Lanes, but Mesa Lanes was a cool hangout where Michaels is now."

Seino says what drove him to join the band was more about reconnecting to an old version of himself, one who grew up playing in bands such as popular SoCal punk band White Flag before becoming a full-time working stiff. His artistic revival came after he was asked to play a punk-rock reunion show at the Echo with bands including the Germs, Adolescents and Redd Kross.

A couple of weeks later, his old friend Sjobeck called him about filling out guitar in his new band. It was an offer he couldn't pass up. "I said yes, and a couple of shows later, he was talking to a couple of guys after the gig, saying, 'I'm so glad Duke joined the band,'" Seino says. "I'm like, 'I did?' And I said, 'Yeah I'll do it.' It's been great."

Part of Mesa Lanes' appeal, especially for the veteran punks who are the band's members, is the lack of ego that allows everyone to contribute, write great songs and enjoy playing without the prospect of trying to become the next big thing. "As far as the band goes, it's comfortable because everyone is in this band to have a good time," Seino says. "It's been great because I feel there's no pressure."

After the personal struggles during his rock-star days with Dodge Dart, Sjobeck says, the only pressure he feels is whether they're going to have a good gig or not. "This is the least selfish band I've ever been in. It's cool. Everyone has a role; they just fit in it perfect," Sjobeck says. "Nobody's trying to be something they're not. Everyone's really comfortable in their roles."

MESA LANES

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HANSEN STAYS WOKE

MADISON PARRY

Eyes Wide Open

No Sleep Records reawakens as a tastemaker

BY DANIEL KOHN

Ever since he was young, all Chris Hansen wanted to do was to make music. But when it came down to actually *playing* music, he realized that maybe the business side of the industry was best for him. "I've always loved music and wanted to be a part of it," Hansen says.

Hansen, who has lived around the country (Salt Lake City, New Jersey, Kansas City and Huntington Beach), interned at Fearless Records and Smartpunk, then did stints at Revelation Records and Trustkill Records. At the urging of a friend, he decided to start his own label at age 22 while working another record-label job to pay the bills. In 2006, No Sleep Records opened up shop in Huntington Beach, and Hansen scoured discovery platforms such as Myspace. "I used the search function for bands that were influenced by the ones I liked," he says.

No Sleep soon established itself as a label for emerging punk, hardcore and emo bands. "I didn't really know what I was doing at first," admits Hansen, who, thanks to his experience working at labels, already had strong contacts, making No Sleep more advanced than other incubator labels.

After putting out post-hardcore band La Dispute's first record, Hansen realized his fledgling label might have a bright future as a tastemaker. Rising artists such as the Wonder Years, Balance and Composure, Allison Weiss, Into It. Over It., and Touché Amore all put out early material through No Sleep. The company also offered free compilations that gave the label and its bands more exposure. With each release, No Sleep garnered respect for its astute sonic vision.

At the label's peak, it had eight people on staff (not including Hansen), a steady supply of interns and an office space.

After nearly a decade of success, No Sleep hit a rough patch in 2015. Bands that were supposed to sell well didn't, and the label's financial difficulties left it with a number of employees it couldn't afford to support. "We put out a lot of records we thought were going to do more than they did," Hansen explains. "Then you're stuck after putting $15,000 to $20,000 into a release, and [you're] in a hole, and it just continues. It got pretty bad for a while, and there were moments when I thought about quitting."

But then he remembered why he opened the label in the first place. He loved bands. "In a way, it was a blessing to rethink things, and [it] brought it back to why I first started," he says.

No Sleep left Huntington Beach for Costa Mesa in 2016, and Hansen is bullish on the label's future, especially as it digs out from its problems. At 33, the label boss is confident his company's best days remain ahead of it.

"It's better than it's been in a long time," Hansen says. "Throughout the 12 years, there've been moments when I thought about walking away from the music industry—it's stressful and a lot of work, and people aren't always great to you. But I think it's all been worth it, and I'm excited to see where it continues and to help new artists further their careers and to find a way to survive doing what they love."

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NAPOLEON RIBEIRA

Friday

DON AMOR, RUBY HUNT, YESES 8 p.m., $5. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com.

THE GARDEN, TIJUANA PANTHERS, COWGIRL CLUE, SHATTERED FAITH 8 p.m., $15, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com

LONG BEACH DUB ALL-STARS, HED P.E., BIG B: 8 p.m., $20-$25, all ages. The Glass House, 200 W. Second St., Pomona. (909) 865-3802; www.theglasshouse.us.

LOS RUNG FU MONREYS, HENCHA BERRINCHES, ELECTRIC GREMLIN 7 p.m., $15, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardeeWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

MAY THE 4TH BE WITH YOU PARTY, WITH LA RANOA SKALAVERA, THE R SHARPS, SPANRSHAFT, UPPER/DOWNER 8 p.m., free. 21+. The Slidebar Rock N Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton. (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com

SONS OF APOLLO, FELIX MARTIN 7 p.m., $25, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardeeWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

Saturday

CUCO, INNERWAVE, ROYALJAG, MUSTY BOYZ 8 p.m., $18-$20, all ages. The Glass House, 200 W. Second St., Pomona. (909) 865-3802; www.theglasshouse.us

GRATEFUL SHRED 8:45 p.m., $15, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com

LA BATALLA FESTIVAL 3 p.m., $20, all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com

LOCO BREWS LOCO GROOVES, WITH KINKY 3 p.m., $12, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardeeWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

MANIC HISPANIC, PINATA PROTEST, SHINER S CLUB, PENETRATORZ 5 p.m., $25, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach. (562) 434-8282; www.alexsbar.com

SUNFLOWER DEAD; CORE 10; SKUMLOVE; BAD HUNTER AND ANNABELLE ASYLUM 8 p.m., $10. 21+. Tiki Bar, 1700 Placentia, Costa Mesa. (949) 270-6252; www.tikibarcc.com.

Sunday

CUCO, INNERWAVE, ROYALJAG 8 p.m., $18-$20, all ages. The Glass House, 200 W. Second St., Pomona. (909) 865-3802; www.theglasshouse.us

FIRME SUNDAYS 5 p.m., $15. 21+. House of Blues at Anaheim GardeeWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

HALL & OATES TRAIN. 7 p.m., $46-$154, all ages. Honda Center, 2695 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim. www.hondacenter.com

MANIC HISPANIC (PERFORMING *THE MENUDO INCIDENT* IN ITS ENTIRETY), PINATA PROTEST, VIRENES 13, THE HENCHMEN 2 p.m., $25, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach. (562) 434-8282; www.alexsbar.com

ROGUE WAVE, THE BUSINESS OF DREAMS 5 p.m., $20, all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

RYAN CABRERA 8 p.m., free. 21+. The Slidebar Rock N Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton. (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com.

Monday

THE JETTIES 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com

Tuesday

THE LONGSHOT, FRANKIE AND THE STUDS 8 p.m., $27.50, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com

Wednesday

ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE, YOO OOO RIGHT, LEAF 8 p.m., $10-$12, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach. (562) 434-8282; www.alexsbar.com

AMO AMO, PURPLE MOUNTAINS MAJESTIES 8:45 p.m., $5. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com

HOT SHAKES, LE RUTCHERETTES 8:30 p.m., $25, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com

Thursday, May 10

OESSA, MONAKR. 8 p.m., $15. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com

DIEGO MONEY, OUWAP KAINE 9 p.m., $15-$50, all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

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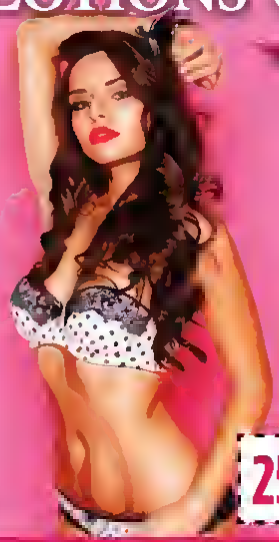

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Quickies

I wish I had a better question, but this is all I have. My friends and I were discussing the nuances of a straight orgy (a roughly equal number of male and female participants) versus a gangbang (one woman, many men), and we observed that there is no proper name for a one man, many women situation. The internet tells me it's just a "reverse gangbang," which is a very disappointing name. Can we please establish a new one?

Curious Nonparticipant

How does "pussy riot" grab you? And while we're on the subject of flipping gendered expressions: A number of years ago, I was asked to come up with a female version of "sausage fest." Sticking with the food theme, I proposed "clam bake." Still mystified as to why it didn't catch on.

Married from 28 to 36, single the past three years, and celibate most of the last couple years. The last two years of my marriage were sexless, and I saw professionals until I was priced out. I could probably earn twice what I'm making now if I moved away, but my current job gives me the flexibility to spend afternoons with my young kids. Last year I had a brief relationship (that included the best sex of my life), but I ended it because I needed more me time. So I lack the willingness or the confidence to be in a relationship, and I don't have the cash to see pros. I'm not fussed by this. Should I be concerned about my celibacy?

Absolutely Not Getting Sex Today

Seeing as your celibacy is intermittent and by your own choice (you walked away from the best sex of your life for me time? What kind of mid- 90s Oprah bullshit is *that*?), ANGST, you're unlikely to wind up hanging out on an "incel" forum filled with angry, violent, socially maladapted men who blame the fact that they can't get laid on women and feminism. So long as you continue to take personal responsibility for all the sex you're not having, there's nothing to be concerned about.

My boyfriend and I have been together for two years. When we first got together, we had sex every day. Then it dwindled. We had major problems along the way and separated three months. During that time, he went to another state. We got back together long-distance, and I received many letters from him saying how much he wanted to have sex with me. He moved back two weeks ago, and we've had sex only twice. He used to say he wanted me to make the first move. But if he really wanted me, wouldn't he make a move? I feel unattended, yet he claims he loves me. Please give me some insight.

No Sex For Weeks

He says he wants sex (with you), but he doesn't make a move. You say you want sex (with him), but you don't make a move. So how about this: The next few times you want sex, NSFW, make a move. If he fucks you two out of three times, maybe he was telling you the truth when he said he'd like you to make the first move. If he rebuffs you every time, then he doesn't want to have sex with you—and you'll have to make a move to end this relationship.

I'm a youngish man who's been in a loving relationship with an older woman for a year. The only area where the age difference comes into play is largely unspoken between us—she wants kids. All of her friends are having kids, and she's nearing the end of her childbearing years. I'm nowhere near ready, and I sometimes question whether I want to be monogamous to any one person for life. We never discuss it, but I can tell how deeply this bothers her and that in her ideal world, I'd be ready to start planning a future with her. I'm rocked with guilt at the possibility that by the time I'm ready for that level of commitment (or, worse, by the time I realize I never will be), she'll be biologically incapable of having kids, which is really important to her. This is all complicated by the fact that this is easily the most loving, trusting, respectful relationship I've ever been in.

Band Afflicted By Years

Speak, BABY: "Look, you want kids. I'm not ready, and I'm not sure I'll ever be ready. Also, I'm not sure about lifelong monogamy. If we need to part ways so you can find someone who wants the same things you do and wants them now, I'll be devastated, but I'll understand."

I'm a 22-year-old woman living in Central Asia doing development work. There are 14 other expats within an hour or two of me, but eight of them are in relationships. I've always been the "single friend," and normally I don't mind. But being surrounded by couples right now has been a tax on my mental health. I know I'm young and should be focusing on this amazing opportunity and my career, but I can't help but feel lonely at times, especially since I can't speak the local language well and these 14 other people are the only ones near me who speak English. What should I do?

Single Anonymous Dame

Math. Eight of the 14 nearby English-speaking expats are in relationships. That means six nearby expats are single like you. SAD. It's not a lot of people to choose from in real numbers, I realize, but as a percentage—40 percent of nearby expats are single—it's statistically significant, as the social scientists say. Focus on this opportunity, focus on your career, and focus on that statistically significant number of nearby singles.

My husband and I listen to your podcast, and we've become a little more open about our wants and needs as a result. Anyway, on two recent occasions, he shaved his pubes. Both times, I told him it was a turnoff. Like, I literally dried up when I saw it. He and he understood, yet now he's about to take a trip with friends and he's done it again. Chest, too, this time. Assuming he's telling the truth and this manscaping effort is not about other women (eye roll), is it fair to me? Can I ask him to stop? Shouldn't he want to stop if it's a turnoff for me? Do I have to be GGG on this, too?

Not Into Bald Balls

I feel your pain—but it's not hair removal that's an issue in my relationship, but hair growth. My husband would like to have a mustache. It's his face (those are your husband's balls), and he can do what he wants with his face (your husband can do what he wants with his balls). But I can do what I want with *my* face, and my face doesn't touch his when there's a mustache on it. Similarly, NIBB, you're not obligated to touch your husband and/or his junk when he's pubeless. When I'm out of town, my husband will grow a mustache, and I don't complain or temporarily unfollow him on Instagram. So long as your husband's balls/crotch/chest are smooth only when they're far from you, it shouldn't be an issue in your marriage—unless the fact that you think he might be fucking another woman (maybe one who's into bald balls?) or thinking about fucking other women. That's an issue you're going to want to address.

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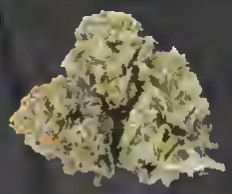

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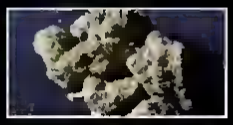

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Toke of the Week

» MARY CARREON

Défoncé Chocolate

About a year and a half ago, we wrote a review of Defonce Chocolatier, a company that crafts decadent, mind-melting, enhanced cocoa bars. Between the sleek packaging and the fact you can't taste even the slightest hint of herb, Défoncé resembles an artisanal chocolate brand you'd find at Whole Foods.

I gifted a bar to my friend, who put it in her freezer next to other, non-medicated artisanal chocolate—and didn't warn her husband. When he got home from work one day, he munched on some chocolate, then went to bed. He woke up two hours later in a panic, thinking he was having a heart attack and that he'd been dosed with LSD. He didn't realize he ate close to 180 milligrams of THC-infused chocolate.

Although no one likes accidentally being dosed with strong weed, Défoncé has changed up its game a bit because of the new laws. Instead of making higher-dose edibles, it now offers chocolate bars with only 90 milligrams of THC. Dosage aside, however, what I didn't emphasize enough in the last review is the quality of the herb in the chocolate. Grown in the Sierra Nevada Foothills, the cannabis used in Défoncé's organic, gluten-free chocolate is grown using biodynamic farming techniques. The cultivators use complex composting methods to build soil so microbially abundant that fertilizer is not required. These methods are nearly unheard of in cannabis cultivation, as it takes years to build soil that healthy. Thus, the cannabis used is as clean as clean herb gets, and some of the plants have been measured to be 16 feet tall and 30 feet wide.

Who says you need chemicals to grow great weed? Défoncé's chocolate proves exactly the opposite.

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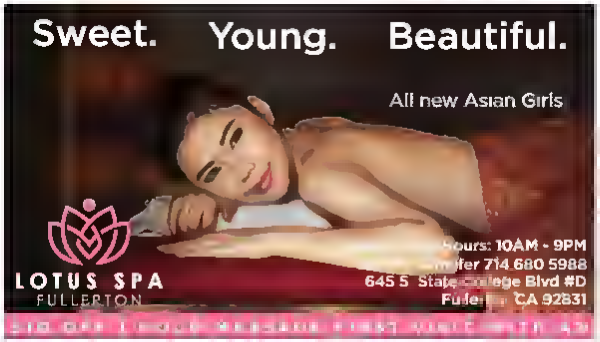
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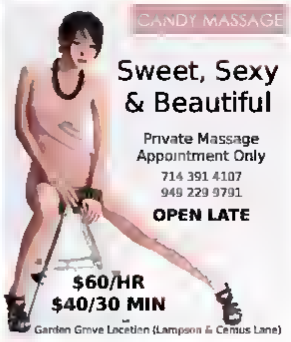
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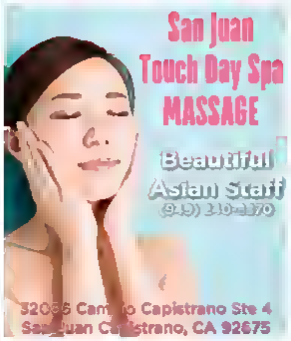
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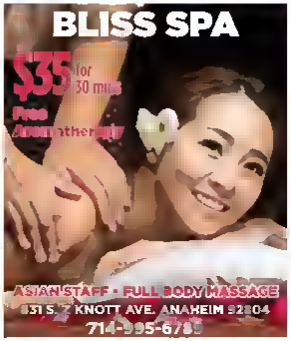
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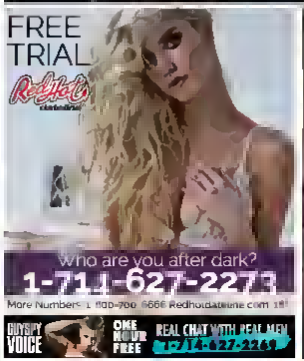
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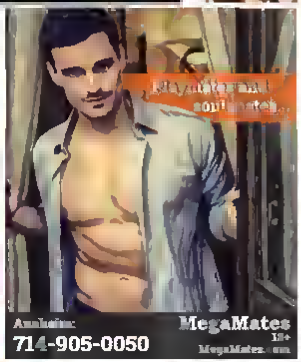
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Heavy Is the Head . . .

The recently appointed queen of Medieval Times in Buena Park is met with cheers and jeers

BY TAYLOR HAMBY

"Are you ready to be a queen?" Queen Isabella asks the young girl standing in front of her as a mid-size crowd of tourists gathers in the main hall of a replica castle on Beach Boulevard on a recent Monday night. "It's quite exciting," she assures the child.

Just before show time at Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament in Buena Park, actress Alexa Moffo performs knighting duties for the general public, officiating over the ceremony that turns commoners to nobility starting at the low price of $20 per thrill.

Moffo herself is a newly annointed noblewoman—she and five other actresses play the lead role in Medieval Times' latest show, which debuted at the sole California location of the dinner-theater chain on March 16. "As the princess, we had a little tiara, and as the queen, of course, we got an upgrade," she noted of the ornate gold crown adorned with large faux rubies and pearls. Princesses, as Moffo was for about a year, used to get their own tiaras and have a bit more freedom in choosing their headwear. But now that the role was phased out, the crown is one size must fit all.

The metal adornment is a bit larger than Moffo's head, but she makes it work by padding the interior. To observe her, one would never know—thanks to this small adjustment, the accessory stays straight just above her brunette curls, making the beautiful young woman look perfectly royal. And besides, padding makes wearing the crown more comfortable.

While script changes aren't uncommon for the show—the Irving, Texas-based company revamps the production every five years or so—this particular changing of the guard hit the headlines harder than past incarnations. Doña Maria Isabella now presides over "the Realm," as well as the jousting tournament and the queen's feast that accompanies it. This marks the first time a queen has been the sole ruler and master of ceremonies at the show. While there have been queens and princesses in the show, they played a secondary and supporting role up until now. "The matriarchal move came as a result of guest feedback on the roles that women played within the fantasy storytelling production," reads a recent press release from Medieval Times. The e-proclamation describes the fictitious Queen Isabella as a "firm, but kind, ruler" who inherited the throne at the passing of her father, the former king.

"Our new female queen is a sign of the times and we couldn't be more excited she is reigning in Southern California," Pedro Gotte, Medieval Times Buena Park's general manager, said via the press release. "Historically, female characters have held strong supporting roles in our production, but now we are showing a woman in charge who is respected throughout the kingdom for her authority, leadership and incredible strength. And she definitely has risen to the occasion."

The announcement of a new matriarchal storyline was met with both cheers and jeers that were not unlike the audience's response to the drama that unfolds during the actual show. Folks have celebrated their champion or booed and hissed their foe almost as if on cue, depending on where they're seated in the political and social arena.

Leigh Cordner, the show's director, said in a *New York Times* report from earlier this year that he began to write the new script over a year and a half before the #metoo and #TimesUp movements began. "The fact that a woman is sitting on the throne in our show at the same time the gender equality movement hit is a coincidence," he told the *Times*.

But Medieval Times is in the business of making money, and as such, it makes sure there's a little something for everyone, even for the trolls who think women must stay in the dungeons of the dark ages. So the Grendels among us should fear not: The show still refers to the female servers as wenches. "They're definitely not doing anything particularly feminist or politically correct," says Nancy McLoughlin, an associate professor of history at UC Irvine who teaches medieval European history with an emphasis on gender. "There's plenty of historical precedent for women to be in power."

Though it wasn't common for a medieval queen to rule her kingdom without being married, it did happen, McLoughlin explains. The most prominent example is Queen Elizabeth I of England, daughter of King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn and who is sometimes referred to as "the Virgin Queen."

"There's nothing controversial about a queen watching a tournament and awarding a winner," she says.

So, then why the outcry?

"The objection to having a queen or having a woman watch a tournament—which is an idea medieval people came up with themselves—and its part as the response to the #MeToo movement or a response to feminism in general, is misplaced," McLoughlin observes. "It's people taking their frustration out about what's going on now.

"The reason why Medieval Times is a fantasy—and why it works—is that everybody can walk into that event, with themselves intact as they are, and then experience the Middle Ages as they're being presented, and they don't care if it's historically accurate, right?" she asks. "It has to be accurate enough to where they feel like they get to go to a different time and place."

COURTESY OF MEDIEVAL TIMES

And who doesn't want to feel that?

The new script even has an unexpected, though probably unintentional, nod to Orange County's own history. There's a rather lengthy back and forth between Queen Isabella and her adviser, Lord Cedric, in which a reference is made to the queen's cousin, King Rodrigo of Valencia, Spain, sending a gift.

"Is it oranges?" asks the adviser excitedly, then goes on for several minutes about how great the oranges in Valencia are.

Lord Cedric is right—Valencia is known for growing sweet and delicious oranges. Which is exactly why William Wolfskill, the pioneer Orange County agriculturalist, named the orange hybrid developed on his farm in SanTana in the mid-19th century a "Valencia orange." Developed just a few miles from where the Medieval Times castle is now, it became the most popular citrus used for juice in the country.

A 32-year cornerstone of the Beach Boulevard tourist district, second only to Knott's Berry Farm in longevity in the immediate area, Medieval Times has become a piece of Orange County history itself. The show began in the 1970s in Spain and worked its way stateside, opening the first castle in Kissimmee, Florida, in 1984. The company pulled a reverse-Disney and opened their second location in Orange County two years later. The Buena Park castle opened next to Knott's Berry Farm and the Movieland Wax Museum (RIP) in 1986 anno Domini, moving into what was previously another tourist attraction, "The Kingdom of Dancing Stallions." It later served as the setting of the iconic Medieval Times scene in *The Cable Guy*, starring Jim Carrey and Matthew Broderick. ("SILENCE OF THE LAMBS!")

Over the past three decades, there have been several styles of figureheads playing the lead in the show including count, master of ceremonies and king. For just shy of 25 years, actor Robert "Lawrence" Whatley of Cypress held court at the Buena Park location as the lead role in its various incarnations—most recently as King Don Carlos.

Whatley—who drew comparisons to Willie Nelson, both in appearance and salt-of-the-earth demeanor—was a Shakespearean actor by training. According to first-hand accounts, he also enjoyed model trains, the High Sierras, strong drinks and Disney.

He retired his crown at Medieval Times in April 2014, an occasion that was marked by the *Orange County Register* as the "end of an era." After Whatley's final performance before retirement, he received a standing ovation, according to the paper. A small photo of him still hangs on a bulletin board in the costume room.

Whatley passed on to the big castle in the sky on March 24, just eight days after Queen Isabella made her debut at the castle he called home for a quarter of a century.

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